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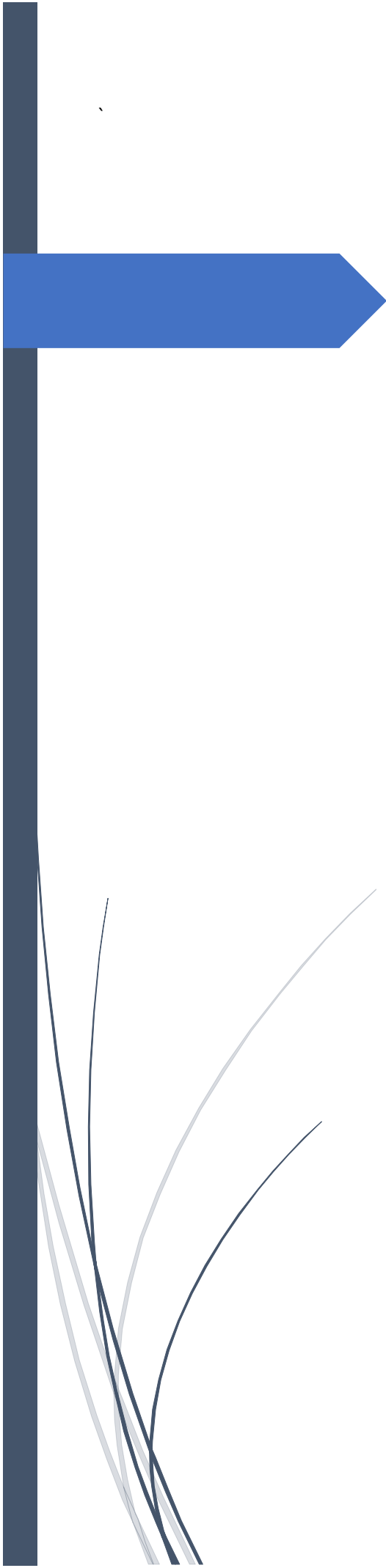
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“It’s more than just playing a sport”. A socio-cultural analysis of participation in netball across the lifespan

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Abstract

This thesis followed the journey of a small sample of women from one netball club located in the East of England to provide an insightful analysis into their childhood experiences of sport, exploring the extent to which this may have shaped their adult participation and the complexities of this connection. The study was conducted from an interpretivist perspective and used an ethnographic approach to examine how the women think and act in different situations, and how this develops over time as a result of previous experiences. These women and their experiences are not viewed in isolation but examined and studied in the wider context and alongside relationships in which their sports experiences have been socially constructed. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of practice examines the extent to which social processes influence the behaviours, tastes, and judgements of individuals. This approach provides a valuable theoretical lens through which to view the sociocultural context of the women's historical childhood experiences of sports participation alongside their current sports participation.

Findings show support for the formation of a habitus towards sports participation developed throughout childhood which has endured into adulthood. The women's habitus persists as a significant influence on their lives, demonstrated in the drive and passion to negotiate their netball participation, which can sometimes cause friction and tension in the women's relationships. Subtle changes are evident in the behaviour and dispositions of the women as they enter different stages of their lives and also as their skill level in the sport increases. Habitus, developed throughout their childhood, influences the women's tastes and socialises them into ways of behaving, however, their behaviour is also shaped and influenced by social structures. This study provides a unique connection of past and present to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of female sports participation.

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I am grateful to my husband, Simon, for his unwavering love, support and encouragement, and my two children, Olivia and Haydn, who always make me laugh and smile, providing the much needed time away from studying to relax and refocus. I would also like to thank my parents for providing me with the opportunities that have allowed me to get to this point, and for their ongoing love and support in whatever I choose to do.

Finally, I would like to thank the netball club for granting me access and to the players for generously giving up their time to participate in the study and allowing me into their lives, as without their generosity this study would not have been possible. I truly hope that my thesis authentically represents you as women and as netballers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the extent of the influences of childhood experiences on participation in recreational netball amongst a group of adult women. This aim was developed following the advice of others to choose a research question associated with a personal level of passion and interest. This left two very clear options for me, the role of the family in sport participation or female recreational sport participation. Upon researching these two options and considering the existing literature on both subjects it became apparent that there were few studies within existing research in sport sociology that investigated the influence of childhood sports experiences on female sports participation in adulthood. This prompted me to reflect upon my own story and whether my childhood experiences and family influences may have shaped my continued participation in the sport of netball.

In the UK, over 42% of women are not active enough to stay healthy (Women in Sport, 2020) and, therefore, investigating this population is more important than ever. Many studies have typically focused on why females do not play sport or why they withdraw (e.g. Wetton et al., 2013) and general levels of female physical activity (e.g. Hanlon et al., 2019), with fewer studies investigating women's experiences of playing sport, such as their initial socialisation into the sport, why they continue to play and how they negotiate their participation throughout adulthood. Such studies of women's experiences of sport, adopting an appreciative inquiry style, may help to identify ways of encouraging and supporting other women to be active.

This chapter discusses the rationale for carrying out this research, comprising a summary of women's sport participation in England, why netball was selected, and a brief history of netball in England. The overall aims of the thesis are specified, followed by a discussion of the methodological approach to the study, as well as the theoretical framework that has been drawn upon through which to view the research. The final section outlines the focus of each chapter of the thesis and captures the overall narrative of this research, which builds a

rich, fluent, and authentic story of women's club sport. The narrative begins with my own story, which, as an integral aspect to the interpretive focus of this inquiry, underpins the entire research.

1.2 My story

Every researcher needs to consider their own position, background and experiences, as this will inform every aspect of the study from forming the research questions, selecting data, and the analysis and interpretation of said data (Braun et al., 2019). This section reflects upon my own story, as a female playing club sport, from childhood through to the time of the study to provide context and to reflect my ontology and epistemology. My experiences have been included within this introduction because, as to be discussed later in the thesis, such experiences are vital to consider and acknowledge, as they will undoubtedly shape how I interpret and make sense of data. "It's what you bring that shapes how you make sense of data, and what you have to decide is 'what story do I tell?'" (Braun et al., 2019, p. 12).

As a young child, sport was always part of family life. My dad, a local rugby player and athlete in his youth, was the sports editor of the local newspaper and I often accompanied him to the various local sporting events on a weekend that he was reporting on: typically the rugby club in the winter and the athletics track in the summer, with some football and cricket thrown in too. Even though at primary school age I did not participate in any formal sports activities other than PE, my dad, and his profession, certainly gave me a flavour of sport and competition. There were also lots of informal sports opportunities as my older brother and I were always in the garden playing football, cricket, tennis, or were out riding our bikes. Further to that, weekly visits to my gran's house on a Sunday afternoon saw games of volleyball and cricket being played, with great rivalry between teams formed of cousins and uncles, while the female adults chatted inside and prepared the tea. Such stereotypical role modelling could have paved the way for the girls of the family to be less active, but it did not, and all my female cousins joined in the sport outside too.

Perhaps reflecting the greater formal sports opportunities for boys at that time, my brother, 18 months my senior, had weekly judo lessons, and played football for the local village team

from around the age of 9, and it was evident that he was talented. We would go and watch football as a family on Sunday mornings and, as a child, I enjoyed watching the game and playing with the siblings of the other players. Gradually my brother's football became more serious and demanding as he was selected for district teams and county teams before being signed as a schoolboy apprentice by the local professional club. My brother entered the football YTS scheme at the age of 16 before signing professional contracts at age 18 but was released by the club in his early twenties, when he went on to set up his own football coaching company.

In contrast, it was not until I began secondary school that I was presented with the opportunity to flourish on the sports field, as my parents had never supported me in joining a sports club outside of school, even though I remember asking to do judo and gymnastics. At secondary school I seized the opportunity to play any sport possible and I quickly became one of the PE teachers' favourites: I was netball, hockey and rounders captain. School provided me with the opportunity to attend county netball trials where I was selected for the U14 squad. It felt great to finally fit the 'sporty' identity held by my dad and brother and to have my own sport to showcase. I joined a local club and netball became a significant part of my life, progressing through the county system to U16 and U18, including U18 England trials, before moving off to university where I studied Sport and Exercise Science. I played netball throughout attending Leeds Metropolitan University and, on returning to my home town, re-joined my original club and continued to train and play, with a couple of breaks in my mid to late twenties due to pregnancy. After university I worked as a sports lecturer in Further Education and then moved into Higher Education.

Throughout adolescence my parents supported both mine and my brother's sports, driving us to and from training and fixtures, paying for kit and fees, watching as many fixtures as they could and most importantly taking an interest, as well as ensuring we were keeping up with schoolwork. Upon reflection, without such financial, logistical and emotional support provided by our parents, playing football and netball to the standard we both did would not have been possible. Therefore, the role of my family appears to have been a significant factor in developing the participation that I continued into adulthood. Now, as a mother, I ensure that I provide such support and opportunity to my daughter and son. However, the

disparity in the sporting opportunities available for boys and girls locally shocked me. Rugby and football seem to be easily accessible for boys and girls, but netball is often limited to PE and school clubs, with minimal community club opportunities in the local area. To help combat such inequality I gained my Level 2 UK Coaching Certificate in Netball and now coach U12, U14 and U16 teams for a local club. The highlighted inequality in sport provision for boys and girls provided further drive for my desire to gather more information about childhood sport experiences and how this may link to adult participation for women.

1.3 Women and sports participation

With sport and physical activity shown to benefit both the physical and mental health of individuals (Speake et al., 2016), increasing sports participation is high on the government agenda to get more people active, and especially to get more women active due to the gender gap. At a time when Sport England aspire to create a sporting habit for life in the youth of today, it is important to establish the factors that, during childhood and adolescence, may influence continued participation, as well as the challenges that arise as participants get older (Downward and Rasciute, 2015). The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2008) have argued that common barriers to female sports participation include: practical barriers such as money, childcare, and access; personal barriers including body image, lack of self-confidence and lack of appropriate clothing/equipment; and socio-cultural barriers relating to issues such as attitudes towards femininity and sexuality, the male-dominated culture of sports and lack of female role models. These barriers often overlap and create a complex set of constraints that women must negotiate and navigate. Research also shows that factors such as educational achievement appear to influence women's sports choices, with higher levels of education associated with the increased decision to participate and increased intensity of participation (Downward and Rasciute, 2015). Although there is a wealth of literature around female adolescent dropout in sport (e.g. Wetton et al., 2013; Eime et al., 2013b), more research needs to be conducted with the population of women that have overcome such barriers to continue or return to their participation during adulthood. Admittedly, complex layers of barriers to participation in sport are present for everyone, yet women often confront additional layers of complexity compared to men. Due to the barriers that women face, "women need to be considered 'holistically' and within the context of their everyday lives" (Women in Sport, 2015, p. 6). To

achieve this depth of information and understanding, this study focuses on nine women in a local netball club setting and explores their own stories of childhood sport and negotiating netball as an adult.

1.4 Netball in England

Netball is a fast-paced invasion team sport, comprising two teams of seven players competing against one another to score the most goals over a duration of sixty minutes, which is divided into four quarters of play. Players are assigned specific positions, with each allocated areas of the court in which they can move, with two players on each team able to shoot and score a goal. Netball is a sport with which I am familiar and have played to a relatively good standard, therefore, to enter into an ethnographic study whereby participating in the sport is required, netball seemed a logical option. Though, this was not the only deciding factor.

Netball was originally developed as a game that was primarily played by women and girls (International Netball Federation, 2018a). Initially adapted from the game of basketball in America in 1891 (Lynch and Ottaway, 2018), netball was first played in England in 1895 at Madame Ostenburg's College. At that time vigorous exercise for women was not typically well received, but netball in England was accepted because "despite being vigorous games they appeared to conform to dominant understandings of femininity as a form of physical restraint" (Treagus, 2005, p. 88). Netball was viewed as more suitable for girls as it was graceful rather than powerful (Treagus, 2005) and grew in popularity throughout the 20th century, largely in British Commonwealth countries (International Netball Federation, 2018a). Although viewed by many as conforming to a feminine ideal netball has predominately remained a sport that is regulated and governed by women (Treagus, 2005), rendering it as a vehicle of feminine agency to drive change and alter the perception of the sport and showcase the athleticism of the female body. Netball has undergone a vast transition from its inception to the game that we see today, with many rule changes over the years to improve the speed and excitement of the game (Delahunty, 2015).

Netball is the most popular female sport in England, and its popularity is continuing to grow (Sport England, 2019) with participation statistics showing that typically one million women

and girls play netball every week in England (England Netball, 2016). The popularity of netball, both at grassroots and elite level, has risen over the duration of the study (2015-2021). This increase in netball popularity may be an effect of the rising visibility of the England Women's team following their 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medal and the 2019 Netball World Cup being held in Liverpool, where 550,000 people tuned in to watch England's semi-final on Sky Sports (De Smith, 2021). There has also been a rise in the visibility of netball with the Vitality Superleague, comprising 11 teams, now shown on Sky TV and across various platforms, attracting new fans to the sport and showcasing the skill and power of the modern-day players. The rise in popularity and success of netball has led to increased funding into the grassroots level of the sport. However, at the time of writing, the pandemic has inflicted long periods of time where grassroots netball could not be played, and the long-term impact on participation is not yet known. Most recreational netball clubs are small, with 23% of clubs comprising of 15 members or less (Nichols and James, 2008), and typically nomadic, relying on the hiring of sports facilities, such as outdoor courts and sports halls, rather than owning their own facilities.

Netball also forms part of the National Curriculum and most girls in England and the devolved nations, will have participated in netball during their school life (Whitehead et al., 2019). However, attrition rates of physical activity are particularly high in females during adolescence (Sallis et al., 2000; Wetton et al., 2013), with those aged 16–18 years moving their participation away from organised, competitive forms of activity to less structured and non-competitive individual forms of physical activity (Eime et al., 2013b). To address the issue of low female sports participation, over a period of ten years Sport England have invested £55 million of National Lottery money into netball initiatives (Sport England, 2019). The largest programme to benefit from this investment was the Back to Netball (B2N) scheme, launched by England Netball in 2008, which has seen over 100,000 women take part (England Netball, 2016). B2N is a national scheme aimed at women of all ages and experience to provide a fun and relaxed reintroduction to netball, with various sessions running around the country (England Netball, 2016). Data collected via an England Netball impact report showed that 89% of B2N participants stayed in the scheme for less than two years with 37% progressing to playing formal club netball, 52% staying active via other forms of physical activity (running/jogging, walking, fitness classes, gym, swimming), and

11% relapsing completely, engaging in no further activity after leaving the scheme. The B2N scheme remains active in various locations across England.

Rather than provide participation statistics for large groups of women, this thesis delves deeper, to gain an insight into the intricacies of the women's individual netball experiences and beyond. To achieve this, the research focuses on a small sample of women from one club located in the East of England, to offer a rich and insightful analysis of this research area. With netball rising in popularity, greater understanding of women's experiences will be able to inform interventions and policy, which could make a significant contribution to narrowing the gender gap in sport participation and encouraging more women to remain active.

1.5 Aims of the thesis

This thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature on female sports participation by examining the influence of childhood sport experiences on adult sports participation. The overall aim of this research is to explore the intricacies of female sports participation at an individual and granular level, investigating any potential connections between the women's childhood experiences of sport and their adult participation, examining the strength and complexities of this connection, and how this may shape their adult participation. To achieve this depth of information the study will focus on three specific areas:

1. The opportunities and support the women received throughout their childhood to be physically active and to participate in sport.
2. How and why the women negotiate their adult netball participation around other aspects of their lives.
3. The women's lived experiences of playing recreational club netball.

The study investigates the way in which the women negotiated their netball participation over the duration of this study, to what extent it was in their power to negotiate netball around other aspects of their lives, and the meaning of their participation, with a view of how their childhood experiences of sport contributed to this meaning and negotiation. It is the incorporation of exploring the women's past and present that is the critical and unique aspect of this inquiry.

1.6 Methodological approach to the research questions

The methodological approach to any study and the research paradigm adopted is, as Willig (2013) suggested, characterised by the researcher's ontological (the nature of reality), and epistemological (the theory of knowledge) stance. The entire practice of this research is, therefore, underpinned and informed by these guiding principles that reflect my beliefs about knowledge and how we know what we know about the world. Given the inductive nature of this research, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate to study the meaning and interpretation of the women's feelings and experiences. This interpretivist standpoint relies upon the "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), as well as recognising the researcher's own background and experiences on the research. My affiliation and extensive experience as a netballer, even though I had no prior involvement with this particular club, afforded me access to the field to conduct a single club ethnographic study, providing valuable in-depth information about these women during their participation in matches and training. Throughout the ethnography I was able to build rapport and trust with each player prior to in-depth interviews being conducted, through becoming a player and an affiliated member of the netball club. This process of socialisation saw me identify as a full participant and legitimate member of the club, which, at times, posed a risk of forgetting my identity as a researcher, which is termed by Bolin and Granskog (2003) as 'going native'. Furthermore, as the researcher is inextricably linked to the participants and often considered an 'object of enquiry' (Ryan, 2018), I maintained a reflective diary throughout, whereby my own life experiences and my relationships with the women could be examined and interrogated.

1.7 Theoretical framework for the study

An individual's behaviour, how they think and act in different situations, develops over time as a result of previous experiences and alongside current experiences. One such theory that considers how social influences can shape a person's world is Bourdieu's (1984) theory of practice. The three tools of habitus, field and capital, provide a theoretical construct through which to view this study and address the research areas. This is achieved by exploring the sociocultural context of the women's historical childhood experiences of sport participation, as well as their current sport participation. It is essential, therefore, not to

discuss these women and their experiences in isolation but to examine and study the wider context and relationships within which their sports experiences have been socially constructed. Bourdieu's work emphasises the significance of the wider social context, such as the opportunities and resources available to children and the impact this can have on both their childhood and adult sport experiences. Children are shaped by their parents and siblings in the home environment, as well as by others in the wider sports community, which in turn influences their behaviours and dispositions towards sports participation.

Bourdieu's concept of capital has been linked to sports participation (e.g. Forsdike et al., 2019). The work of Robert Putnam and James Coleman also explores capital (namely social capital), but as a stand-alone concept, which differs from Bourdieu's relational view that capital can only be understood through the concepts of habitus and field (Knight, 2014). The theoretical interests of Bourdieu lie in the examination of social conflicts in different fields; they are concerned with forms of power, domination and deprivation whereas Putnam's approach is not conducive to investigating conflicts or opposing interests (Siisiainen, 2003). Putnam's conceptualisation of social capital lies at the macro and political level in contrast to the meso-level analysis required by Bourdieu's focus on the social group as a whole (Forsdike et al., 2019). Bourdieu's theory, therefore, offers the most appropriate epistemological and methodological lens through which to explore the complexities of childhood sport experiences and adult participation of the women in this study.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

The overall aim of this research is to explore the extent to which the women's childhood experiences of sport shape their adult participation, the complexities of this relationship and how this interacts with other influential factors that mould their participation. To tell this story, this thesis is structured into eight further chapters:

In Chapter Two, a critical review of the literature focuses on female sport participation from childhood through to adulthood. The chapter is formed of two parts, with the first part considering what is meant by the term 'gender' and how this can influence a child's socialisation into sport, including a discussion of family resources, family structure and sibling influences. The second part examines the impact of leisure time and how this has

changed over time for women, alongside the factors that influence female sports participation including motherhood. The environment in which sport is played and the impact this may have on female participation, such as the attraction of team sports and the role of sports clubs and community is also considered. The final section culminates in a review of the literature drawing links between the impact of childhood sports experiences and adult participation, introducing the concept of habitus formation towards sports participation.

Chapter three is a theoretical literature review that focuses on the application of Bourdieu's body of work in a sports context. This review has been included because Bourdieu's work is central to the analysis in this thesis and, therefore, warrants a substantial overview. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of practice and his three interconnected concepts of field, habitus and capital are examined, with a focus on their connection to research within sport, and how they relate to this study. The chapter provides evidence for the value of Bourdieu's theory of practice as an overarching theoretical lens through which to view this thesis.

Chapter Four is again formed of two parts. The first part concentrates on the qualitative research methodology chosen, the ethnographic approach, and the research methods used in the study. Part two considers issues critical to the research process including ethical considerations and access, data protection and discussions around rigour, generalisability and reflexivity. The chapter concludes with a detailed examination of thematic analysis, before documenting the data analysis methods used, and my own journey as a researcher, to provide clarity of the process.

Chapter Five provides the context of the case study and 'sets the scene' prior to the results chapters. It begins with an introduction to Uptown Netball Club (a pseudonym), its history and structure, before moving on to introduce the participants of the study. Short vignettes of each player are presented, in the order that they are introduced during the study. The purpose of the vignettes is to ensure that the women's stories are located within the wider context of their lives and to provide the foundation and background for discussion in relation to the research findings.

Chapters Six, Seven and Eight present the key findings of the research from the reflexive thematic analysis of the data. Three key thematic areas are identified (from girl to woman, meaning and negotiation, club and community) and the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature.

The thesis culminates with Chapter Nine where the conclusion and findings of the study are situated within the relevant research areas. The contribution of the findings to further knowledge and understanding in the field are evaluated, with a consideration of the application of the findings and implications for policy and practice. The final section of the chapter discusses the limitations of the study and suggests areas that may warrant further research.

1.9 Chapter conclusion

The disparity between male and female sport participation in the UK and the drive to encourage more girls and women to be active provides the overarching rationale for this thesis. At present, research into recreational female sport is limited and, therefore, an increased breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding in this area, in a range of different settings, is required to inform strategies for increasing female participation. This thesis aims to contribute to this area of research by providing an in-depth view into the lives of nine women that have successfully navigated their netball participation into adulthood. The narratives of these women, alongside the observations of the researcher into the intricacies and experiences of the women's current sport participation, will explore potential connections between childhood and adult experiences of sport. Connecting the past to the present this study will also investigate how the women negotiate their participation around other aspects of their lives and provide insight to the culture of a recreational netball club and how this contributes to the women's participation and the wider grassroots netball community. Through interpreting and understanding the women's participation alongside existing and emerging research into other areas of female sport, this research will provide a unique contribute to the overall understanding of women's sport.

This chapter has introduced the thesis, through the presentation of insights into the justification and motive, both personal and professional, for carrying out this study and the

overall aims of the research. In an interpretative qualitative investigation such as this, context is key, and the context for this study has been conveyed through telling my own story, the story of English netball, as well as a summary of female sports participation in England. The methodological and theoretical approach to the study was also introduced, providing further context by stipulating the qualitative and interpretative paradigm within which the study is located. Finally, an overall view of the thesis was presented mapping the story that will unfold throughout. The next chapter critically evaluates literature on female sport participation.

Chapter 2: A gendered view of sport participation across the lifespan

2.1 Introduction

Sport involvement for men and women continues to present disparities in participation and only by examining the factors that encourage engagement and continued participation in female sport can these differences be understood (Lim et al., 2011). The study of sport sociology aims to gain insight and understanding into how and why people participate in sport, the meaning and impact of their participation, and how this can change throughout their life (Pike and Coakley, 2009). A growing body of literature suggests that sport participation during childhood and its associated experiences play a part in shaping an individual's attitudes and behaviours towards sport into adulthood (e.g. Birchwood et al., 2008; Haycock and Smith, 2014). Therefore, to gain an understanding of adult sports participation an individual's childhood experiences of sport should not be ignored. One of the most powerful social constructions that shapes a person's life is the family unit (Bourdieu, 1996), and the individuals that form part of a family play a key role in developing a child's physical activity beliefs and behaviours (Blazo and Smith, 2018).

The aim of this chapter is to review previous literature that has considered how socialisation into sport as a child and childhood experiences of sport may potentially impact women's sport participation into adulthood. This review was a continuously evolving and developing process with new search terms added throughout the duration of the study based upon the data gathered. Initially, search terms were focused on phrases such as 'family influences and sport', 'socialisation and sport' and 'female team sport' as well as a generic 'netball' search. As the study progressed more specific keywords such as 'gender', 'identity', and 'leisure time' were included, alongside phrases such as 'sports club and culture' and 'life transitions and sport participation'. To structure this review the chapter is divided into two parts. The first half focuses on childhood experiences of sport, including discussions on the structure, resources, and influences of the family, with gender at the forefront of these discussions. The second half of the chapter explores the existing literature that relates to adult female sport participation, including the impact of life transitions, the culture of team sport and sports clubs. Throughout the chapter netball-based studies will be referred to where

appropriate. The final section draws both childhood and adult experiences of sport together by considering the formation of a habitus towards sport participation developed during childhood.

Part 1 Building the foundations: socialisation into sport

This section critically discusses the literature which explains the process of socialisation into sport during childhood, the impact of gender on childhood sports participation and sport choices, and the role of the family during this socialisation process.

2.2 Childhood and family resources

The family a child is born into, or grows up in, is shown to significantly impact their sports participation both during childhood and later in life. There exists a considerable body of literature to demonstrate that physical activity participation is influenced by social class, the home environment and economic status. Socioeconomic status (SES) is defined by Scott and Marshall (2009, p. 110) as, “Any measure which attempts to classify individuals, families, or households in terms of indicators such as occupation, income, and education”. SES and class are often used interchangeably, however, there is a distinction. Classes are clearly categorised entities that differ qualitatively from one another, whereas SES is less well defined with a “gradual quantitative difference between strata” (Wohlfarth, 1997, p. 399). SES is used to refer to an individual’s current situation which can be changeable whereas, social class is applied to describe an individual’s sociocultural background, thus, making it more stable (Rubin et al., 2014). An individual, therefore, may have greater mobility between strata than between social classes.

Drawing on research from other western industrialised societies spanning several decades, a number of studies reported that children living in high-income neighbourhoods have higher rates of participation in organised sport and physical activities compared with children from middle- and lower-income neighbourhoods (Sallis et al., 1996; Gorely et al., 2009; Cairney et al., 2015). In their mixed methods UK based study of 1171 adolescents, Gorely et al. (2009) reported that high sedentary behaviour was greater in boys living in single parent families and girls from low socio-economic families. Further explanation was not provided by Gorely et al. (2009) in their study, though, data from Australia that were offered by Hardy et al.

(2010) suggested footwear and uniforms were cited as the main expense by families with lower incomes and for those families with girls. Such detail, although informative, is acknowledged by Hardy et al. (2010) as limited due to the small response rate in their study, and they emphasise the need for more qualitative studies. There is, however, a wealth of evidence to indicate that the resources of a family, including cultural, physical and economic resources, significantly influence a child's engagement in physical activity settings (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007). For example, a growing body of literature suggests that middle-class parents, have the resources and inclination to devote to their children's sport (Wheeler and Green, 2014) with the provision and support for sports participation viewed as a key element of 'good' parenting in middle-class social networks (Wheeler and Green, 2019). In contrast, for those without available resources supporting their children in organised sport is more challenging.

Over time, an extensive literature has developed on the inequality in sports participation for those children in single parent families and those residing in low socioeconomic areas. For example, in a large scale survey of over 26,000 students across Canada, McMillan et al. (2016) reported that the reduction in organised sport participation, experienced by children residing in both single-parent and reconstituted families (comprising a mother or a father and either a stepmother/father's girlfriend or stepfather/mother's boyfriend), was partly mediated by the financial situation of the family. Families of low socioeconomic status were unable to cover the upfront costs of organised sports participation. From an alternative perspective, Lundy et al. (2019), conducted qualitative retrospective timeline interviews with Canadian participants from a middle-upper-class upbringing. Results indicated that social class appeared to influence athletic development. Interuniversity student-athletes credited their success to positive family environments where they were encouraged in their sport participation through family leisure activities such as kayaking at a family cottage or skiing while at a family cabin. Such findings are indicative that the SES within the household where children are raised not only impacts upon whether they will take part in sport and physical activity, but also the type of sport and physical activity that children engage in. Though, findings by Dunn et al. (2016) indicated that larger financial investments by the family were associated with greater perceptions of parent pressure by the athlete, as well as a decrease in their enjoyment of and commitment to the sport. This would suggest a slightly

more complex relationship between the distribution of resources and child sport participation. Extending this line of research further, a systematic review by Elhakeem et al. (2017) reported that studies have also linked greater parental socioeconomic position in childhood to be associated with increased leisure time physical activity in adulthood. The review included studies from the UK, Finland, Sweden, Australia, USA and Brazil.

Research exploring SES and childhood sporting activity appears to be consistent across a variety of different countries and cultures, with lower SES linked to lower levels of participation though Grima et al. (2017) argued that national traditions and values do also play an important role in sports participation. For example, Grima et al. (2017, p. 94) highlighted that the sport and physical recreation culture in Norway is:

deeply rooted in society and is supported by strategic socio-economic circumstances, high standards of living, equality between genders, abundant sporting facilities, a school system that keenly promotes physical activity, a strong voluntary sports clubs sector and high levels of parental contribution.

Research to date exploring family environments and socioeconomic status can, therefore, only be considered as a first step towards a more profound understanding of the role of the family in continued sports participation. To inform future interventions to increase sports participation, further research is required in this area to explain the more nuanced and complex connections between family structure and organised sport participation and the associated pathways children and adolescents follow (McMillan et al., 2016). Turning first to family structures.

2.3 The ever-changing family structure

Family structures have been evolving and shifting over the last few decades and societal trends provide the context to the literature on both childhood and female adult sport experiences. For example, marriage rates have fallen steadily since the early 1970s with decreases of 3 to 4% per annum (Office for National Statistics, 2019a) and, in the 1990s, over 30% of births in the UK occurred outside married partnerships (Office for National Statistics, 2015a). Lone parent families have also increased in number and in 1991 families headed by a lone parent accounted for 20% of all families with dependent children in the

UK, three times the proportion of 1971 (Office for National Statistics, 2007). Divorce has also had an impact on the family structure and the Office for National Statistics (2007) suggested that approximately one in four children born in 1979 were affected by divorce before reaching the age of 16. Employment was also shifting in the 1980s with an increase in the percentage of women joining the workforce rising from 56.8% in 1980 to 62% in 1989 (Office for National Statistics, 2019a), with figures showing 29% of women to be in full-time employment in 1985 (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018). Information such as this provides the context for childhood experiences during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Moving forwards to 2015, when this study began, there were 18.7 million families in the UK and the most common family type was the married or civil partner couple family, with or without dependent children, reaching 12.5 million. The fastest growing family type in the UK in 2015 continued to be the cohabiting couple family, at 3.2 million (Office for National Statistics, 2015b). Lone parents with dependent children accounted for 25% of all families with dependent children, and 90% of lone parents with dependent children were women, and men the remaining 10%. Data also showed that there were 15,098 couples that had formed same sex marriages in England and Wales between March 2014 and June 2015. Female employment in 2015 had risen to 68% (Office for National Statistics, 2019a) and the percentage of families where both parents work increased from 49% in 1975 to 68% in 2015 with the number of women working full-time at 44% in 2017 (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2018). These statistics portray the evolvement of family structure and roles within UK society, which in turn will influence the temporal and economic family resources available for sports participation. Furthermore, the holistic family unit has the potential to be equally as important as the individual relationships between family members with regard to sport participation and development, including the socialisation of children into sport (Lundy et al., 2019).

2.4 Parental Influence: socialising children into sport

Evidence suggests that the family a child is born into impacts their participation in physical activity and influences their attitudes and behaviours (Strandbu et al., 2020). The question of whether this is due to inheriting certain genes that pre-determine the tendency to want to be physically active or being brought up in an active family has been extensively explored.

Research would suggest it is a combination of both, as inheriting certain genes may lend itself to possessing certain natural abilities. However, it is the experiences provided by the family to nurture and develop these abilities that is key (Tucker and Collins, 2012). Many children start to participate in organised sport during young childhood (Coakley, 2011) and in the UK, participation is usually via extracurricular activities offered by the school or by attending local sports clubs (the influence of school PE will be discussed later in this chapter). For children, especially primary school children, it is likely that, although the child may decide whether they would like to attend an activity, it is the parents who make the final decision. Returning to the study by Hardy et al. (2010), as well as the cost of sport, the variety of activities and the time commitments were also shown to influence parental decisions about participation in organised sport in Australia. Invariably a parent will decide whether the activity is valuable, cost effective and logistically possible and, based on these factors, will either provide or not provide an opportunity for their child to take part in sport.

Parental decisions to provide opportunities for sport participation can be viewed through the lens of Bourdieu, who used the term 'capital' to refer to "a form of power, the capacity individuals and groups might have to impact upon, change or control situations" (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 168). Parents possess the power to control their child's participation through the distribution of capital. They typically decide upon the distribution of economic, social and cultural resources for their children (Wheeler and Green, 2014), which is influenced by the parent's own values and beliefs about sport. Children are, therefore, more likely to participate in sport if their childhood is spent in a home whereby sport is valued. Indeed, parents often socialise their children into the sports in which they previously participated (Côté, 1999). Parental distribution of capital can also be influenced by the role of gender and the type of activities that they encourage their child to participate in.

2.4.1 The influence of gender

The term 'gender' is a social construction that is used to allocate a set of suitable behaviours to the male or female sex, aligning to societal expectations of how men and women should act and behave (Appleby and Foster, 2014). In society men and women experience gender socialisation, where they learn gender norms of femininity and masculinity (Devonport et al., 2019). Gender is often misinterpreted as being linked to the sex of the individual (male

or female) and, therefore, linked to biology, resulting in the misconception that males are masculine and females are feminine (Daniels, 2016). Rather than a biological categorisation, gender should instead be viewed as a linguistic categorisation (Daniels, 2016), and one that can shift over time (Parratt, 1994). Femininity is defined by Daniels (2016, p. xxi) as a social construction that “represents a set of understandings that develop as people interact with the world and encounter the social dynamics of power and ideology”. To represent the dominant forms of the male sexual character, Connell (1987) devised the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, which is defined as “the cultural patterns of action that allow some men to maintain dominance over females and subordinated males” (Kreager, 2007, p. 709). Sport is an environment which very much celebrates dominant hegemonic masculinity (Silva, 2018). Hegemonic masculinities are not, however, the only masculinities operating within society but instead masculinities are numerous, shifting and dynamic (Jewkes et al., 2015).

What is considered as femininity or masculinity alters according to time, place and circumstance (Priyadharshini and Pressland, 2016). The study of gender in sport and physical domains began around 1960 with the study of female athletes, before moving away from this to a critique of sporting culture in the 1980s, where scholars began to engage in feminist critique regarding the social construction of woman and femininity (Bandy, 2015). There are multiple ways of being man or woman that differ greatly from the expectations of gender in the 1950s and earlier. Masculinity and femininity have traditionally been viewed as mutually exclusive with individuals labelled as masculine or feminine, though more contemporary thinking views individuals as having both masculine and feminine qualities. There are many forms of masculinity and femininity and Priyadharshini and Pressland (2016, p. 3) explain that:

not all masculinities are masculine, and femininities, feminine, individuals could have varying relationships to the ‘ideal’ notions of masculinity or femininity, allowing them to perform a range of masculinities and femininities.

Historically, sport has a socially constructed culture of male and masculine domination contributing to the oppression of women (Theberge, 1985). For example, histories of sport in the nineteenth and even twentieth century have argued that in the past women were

labelled as too weak to participate in sports, especially any that required endurance. This was based on the argument that sport was detrimental to the health of women, especially their reproductive health (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008). Typically, within English society prior to 1914, most women and girls only participated in some form of calisthenics and gymnastics (McCrone, 1991). Although, as discussed in Chapter 1, netball was perhaps the one exception being, as it was, a team sport that adhered to feminine conventions and due to this, became more popular throughout the 20th century. Despite this popularity, Marfell (2012), who investigated the experiences of New Zealand women in netball from the 1940s and 1970s, reported that the domestic roles and responsibilities of women hindered their sport participation, including restrictions placed on female netball players.

The participation of women and girls in sport is important to not only overcome gender stereotypes relating to the physical capabilities of women but also those concerning the role of women in local communities and wider society (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008). Over past decades, considerable sociological and societal advances have been made to enhance the sport participation and sport performance of women. This was demonstrated in the 2012 Olympics, which were the first Games where all nations included female athletes, and all disciplines were accessible to women, however, in spite of these advancements, sport is still considered a male domain (Ruchaud et al., 2017). The social environment, including the family unit, are often influential in communicating and reinforcing such gender beliefs to children (Boiché et al., 2014). Gender variations in children's attitudes towards sport are powerful and emerge at a very young age, predominantly through socialisation rather than due to any 'natural' differences in ability (Eccles and Harold, 1991).

In the context of socialisation into sport participation, parents often serve as role models for their children, with children copying their parents' behaviours. This was demonstrated in a seminal study by Moore et al. (1991) who reported that children of active parents were almost six times as likely to be active than children of non-active parents. More recently, a systematic review of selected papers between 2008-2018 by Petersen et al. (2020) of child and parent physical activity, reported a positive relation between parent and child physical

activity. These studies concluded that more active parents would have more active children. Historically, parents who gained enjoyment from physical activity encouraged their children's physical activity to a greater extent than parents who experienced lower levels of enjoyment (Brustad, 1993). The importance of parents was also highlighted in a qualitative study of a French swimming club by Light and Lémonie (2010), where most of the children joined due to the influence of family members, where parents were active and considered good role models. Alternately, other studies have shown that parents do not always have to participate in sport, but that they can be role models for their children by coaching sport (Fredricks and Eccles, 2004) or by simply enjoying sport (Dixon et al., 2008). Findings from Dixon et al.'s (2008) qualitative investigation explained that mothers wanted their daughters to have the sports experiences that were not available to them when they were younger or were not allowed to have. They were conscious to communicate to their daughters that sports participation was good. This message appeared to have a powerful and enduring effect on their daughters' sports involvement, who were all successful female coaches in the US. This research suggested that parental attitudes towards sport can be just as powerful as parental participation.

Parental attitudes can be influenced by gender and, in a review of the literature, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) concluded that the majority of studies found a strong gender difference in physical activity levels, with evidence suggesting that boys engaged in more activity and received greater parental support. Yet, Gustafson and Rhodes (2006) acknowledged that both parents did not always form similar judgements of their child's ability, and one parent may hold greater influence over the child's development than the other. The review also provided some evidence for a correlation between mother-daughter physical activity, but mother-son correlations were less consistent. In contrast, a strong correlation existed linking father and child physical activity. A more recent study of children in China by Lijuan et al. (2017), gathering data using accelerometers and questionnaires, found that although boys engaged in more moderate to vigorous physical activity than girls no gender differences were noted in the support provided by parents or by parents' physical activity. Furthermore, a UK based quantitative study by Solomon-Moore et al. (2018) observed that, during the week, it was mothers who primarily supported their children's activity but

children, and in particular boys, showed higher levels of physical activity when both parents shared the provision of support.

Evidence of a shift in parental support becoming more equal for boys and girls is demonstrated in the more recent studies, though, many of these studies refer to general physical activity rather than playing organised sports. Moving the focus from physical activity to sport, a study by Heinze et al. (2017), which gathered data using an online survey, indicated that parents valued sport for sons, to a somewhat greater extent, than for daughters, both ideologically and financially. The results also suggested that parents' gender role beliefs shaped their beliefs about their daughters' participation in sport, including the type of sports their daughters engaged in. Similar findings were replicated in research by the Women's Sport Foundation (2020), which reported 32.2% of parents believed boys to be better at sports than girls. In a society where teenage girls often face more constraints to their participation than boys, Strandbu et al. (2020) advocate that the role of the family in developing a family culture towards sport, is even more important for this demographic.

The family provides the most important role models in a child's life and although male family members can serve as good role models, Daniels (2016) has argued that it is important for girls to see other girls and women in the family being active. Research particularly supports the role of mothers in their daughter's sports involvement. For example, referring back to the American study by Dixon et al. (2008), who interviewed 17 female National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I head coaches from the US, both mothers and fathers contributed to their daughters' sports involvement, although, greater emphasis was placed on their mothers' contribution. A number of authors investigating parental involvement in various cultures and contexts have produced similar findings that revealed that both mothers and fathers influenced female sports participation, but that mothers are more involved in their daughters participation, and have less influence over their son's involvement. Such findings were evident in a study by Bauer et al. (2008) who, using large scale survey data, reported a positive relationship between parental encouragement to be active and increased physical activity in males and younger females five years later, with greater influence by their same sex parent in younger adolescents. Results also indicated a significant relationship between physical activity and maternal

encouragement for high school aged females, which suggested that mothers were more likely to influence the physical activity of older girls. Maternal influence was also a feature in a Serbian quantitative study by Milošević and Vesković (2013) who reported that, although fathers were more involved in the children's sports activities compared to mothers, and that father involvement was equal for both boys and girls, mothers were more involved in their daughters' sports activity than their sons'. Findings were similar in a Lithuanian study by Sukys et al. (2014), who reported that fathers' and mothers' exercise habits could predict their daughters' participation in sport, but only the fathers' regular physical activities predicted the sons' sports activities. Both parents being active also featured as important in a Portuguese study by Rodrigues et al. (2018), however, findings also reinforced the gender influence of fathers on their sons' sport and the importance of mothers in their daughters' sport. Girls with mothers who were physically active participated in a greater number of sports and participated more times per week.

These studies provided evidence for connections between parental sport involvement and child participation, as well as links to gender differences. More active parents are likely to have more active children, with active fathers influencing sons and daughters, but active mothers typically only influencing their daughters. Parental physical activity is not the only factor linked to child sport participation, with parental attitudes also significant in providing opportunities and support for their children. Many studies have reported gender differences in parental attitudes towards sport involvement. Nonetheless, they did not fully explore the intricacies and narratives involved in such social interactions, with the majority of studies using quantitative methods. Therefore, despite decades of research, findings are mixed regarding parental support and gender, which is not surprising given that the balance of power between the sexes has been continuously changing, and that diverse cultures and countries may produce different results. More recent studies showed a shift towards equal support provided by parents to both boys and girls to be physically active, although with differing levels of impact, and perhaps encouragement towards different types of activities. Despite this shift, studies continue to report boys to be generally more physically active than girls (Osai and Whiteman, 2017). To explore the impact of parental support further, particularly when equal support is provided to sons and daughters, one question that arises

is whether gender influences the type of activities that children are encouraged to engage in.

2.4.2 Femininity and choice of activity

Sports activities are viewed in society as masculine, feminine, or neutral and research within this area has provided evidence that the stereotypes and gender roles associated with certain sports were often consistent across western countries, and that such perceptions were assumed during childhood (Chalabaev et al., 2013). Feminine sports are considered to be those activities which have an emphasis on appearance and attractiveness, such as tennis and gymnastics, whereas masculine sports pose danger and risk like rugby and boxing (Koivula, 2001). Even where men and women engage in the same activity adaptations are often implemented. For example, in some tennis tournaments women only play three sets instead of the five played by men, or in cross country distances are different for males and females, which positions women as being less capable than men. Some authors suggest that women are more likely to keep away from strenuous activities or organised sports that are perceived as masculine domains (Hanlon et al., 2010). Conversely, Roster (2007) argued that modern-day society provides women with greater leisure choices with many activities no longer dictated as being for women or for men:

Contemporary feminist literature provides a guiding framework to suggest how empowerment can arise from women's claim to leisure in general and particularly when women choose to engage in activities that challenge ideologies associated with gender and sexuality.

(Roster, 2007, p. 444)

Social definitions of activities that are considered to be masculine and feminine are ever changing and dynamic, but society continues to identify some sports as gender-specific (Appleby and Fisher, 2005). This socially accepted 'gender status' of a sport influences the meanings of masculinities and femininities of those who participate (Priyadharshini and Pressland, 2016). For example, an ethnographic account of an elite women's rugby team found that societal attitudes towards highly 'masculinised' sports such as rugby were one of the most prevalent external barriers to participation (Howe, 2001). Those women who choose to participate in a sport that is considered to be a masculine domain have their

femininity and their sexuality questioned (McGannon et al., 2018; Scheadler and Wagstaff, 2018). In contrast, some women engage in exercise to shape appearance and conform to the feminine bodily ideal. Despite the empowerment gained by many women through continued participation, Mutrie and Choi (2000) argued that such motives maintain and promote sexism and patriarchal beliefs. Findings from a UK study by Russell (2002), using a mixed method approach of questionnaires and interviews to compare 180 female players' participation motivations in rugby, cricket and netball, reported that control over one's body shape and size was more important for netballers. Netballers were significantly oriented towards their appearance, with physical appearance having a strong influence on overall body satisfaction. This suggested that netballers may be striving to align with the more traditional ideal of femininity associated with gender specific sports. These findings show links to those of Crissey and Honea (2006) who reported that the risk of body image and dieting problems related to dominant gender roles were heightened through participation in stereotypically feminine sports, particularly for white girls, but not through stereotypically masculine sports.

Undoubtedly, stereotypes are continuously being challenged regarding social conformity of femininity and masculinity in relation to the sporting body, yet, contradictions in society still exist. For instance, gathering data using focus groups, Lunde and Gattario (2017) found that young Swedish women who played sport had a complex view of themselves, with their bodies viewed for performance as being strong, fast and agile but also that they wanted their bodies to fit the societal cultural standards. There was a contradiction between lifting weights to become stronger for their sport without becoming muscularly bulky. This is termed the 'female athlete paradox', where women feel conflicted about being an athlete, which is synonymous with strong, masculine traits and which contradict those associated with being a woman and femininity (Krane et al., 2004). The societal implications of femininity and bodily ideals and the performing body is a factor in female sports participation, influencing not only the type of activity engaged in but whether girls and women have the confidence to engage at all.

Femininities and masculinities are learned within the social contexts (Paechter, 2007), and are often reflective of cultures and demonstrated in the sports activities that children

participate in. In a study of American children's consciousness of gender, using questionnaires and interviews, Schmalz and Kerstetter (2006) found that some sports were clearly labelled by children as feminine (ballet, dance) or masculine (American football, wrestling) but that many sports were gender neutral. The findings indicated that more girls participated in masculine sports than boys who participated in feminine sports, which would suggest that girls have a greater breadth of freedom in selecting sports than boys. These findings were replicated in a study of Spanish 15-17 year olds whereby questionnaire results showed girls' had more diversity, as they participated in neutral sports to a much greater extent than boys (Alvariñas-Villaverde et al., 2017). In contrast, the aforementioned study by Gorely et al. (2009), which gathered data using assessment diaries, found that some UK schoolgirls still held traditional views regarding gender-appropriate sports. While the identity of being sporty was perceived by most to be acceptable, it was still portrayed as contradicting the norms associated with femininity. Similar to Gorely et al.'s (2009) findings, Wheeler (2012) interviewed Welsh children and their families, and reported that children's activities were also highly gender stereotyped, with football, taekwondo and water sports most popular for boys, while for girls it was dancing and ice skating. Further evidence of a gender influence was presented by Carlin et al. (2015), who used questionnaires and focus groups. Findings revealed that 11-13-year-old UK males preferred more intense and competitive forms of physical activities, for instance structured sport, whereas females showed preference for activities like dance. Such gender stereotypes in the context of sport conveyed from the social environment have been linked to dropout in female adolescents (Boiché et al., 2014).

The research evidence presented shows how the balance of the sexes has changed over the years to provide girls with greater opportunity to participate in sports and physical activity but that progress is still required as gender stereotypes in society remain a factor in female sports participation. Such stereotypes influence the type of activity girls choose to engage in, with activities often still labelled as masculine or feminine. In addition, girls often feel conflicted over developing their bodies for athletic prowess and the ideal feminine physique. Netball, as previously discussed in Chapter 1, is viewed as a feminine team sport, governed by women, conforming to the traditional view of femininity, and, therefore, provides a distinctive environment in which to study female sport participation.

2.4.3 Femininity and netball

Netball is considered to be a feminine appropriate sport as the requirements of the sport align more with the societal notion of femininity (Devonport et al., 2019). Even the clothing required to play netball has remained relatively unchanged over the years, with women and girls still expected to wear netball attire that reflects feminine conventions, such as dresses or a skirt and top (Marfell, 2017). However, these are now extremely short in length and made of lycra, producing a body-hugging effect (Treagus, 2005). This in itself can cause females stress in relation to how their bodies may look in tight fitting uniforms, to the extreme that some women may not even attempt a sport because of how they look in the required dress (Staurowsky, 2016). Indeed, research by Slater and Tiggemann (2011) reported that teasing and concerns over body image may contribute to the lower participation rates of adolescent girls' in sport and physical activity. The dilemma concerning netball kit has been acknowledged and considered an urgent issue to address in Netball Australia's State of the Game Report released in December 2020 but remains a key feature of netball in the UK.

The perception of netball as a feminine sport was reflected in a recent study by Devonport et al. (2019) that explored the gendered performances and identity construction of UK female university football players and netballers. Some of the women in their study stated femininity as one of the reasons that attracted them to the sport. During focus group interviews, the women reported that new players were made aware of certain expectations within the team to do their hair, put on moisturiser and wear make-up before a game. There were also examples of newer players who did not initially follow these conventions but soon began to conform to these cultural practices to fit in. As such, the netballers did not struggle to maintain both their athletic and gendered identities yet, for the netball players in particular, the body and appearance created continuous anxiety. The women in Devonport et al.'s (2019) study were also keen to identify their differences to other sports such as rugby, supporting the notion of netball being feminine and acceptable, and implying other sports were masculine and unacceptable. In contrast, the footballers showed resentment of assumptions that all women who play football are masculine and butch and explained how this can lead to people being reluctant to play football. In addition, those women who

purposefully did not conform to society's ideals of femininity were not welcomed by those who were trying to avoid such stereotypes. Such behaviour by female athletes to emphasise femininity has been termed 'female apologetic behaviour' (Hardy, 2015).

Gender stereotypes, and in particular the notion of netball as a female sport in society, is often reinforced during childhood through school PE. Although today in the UK boys and girls often participate in netball together at primary school (a recent development), at secondary school boys and girls are separated for physical education lessons, each following different areas of the National Curriculum, with typically only girls participating in netball. Throughout the UK, youth netball clubs and sessions are also predominantly female, with only a handful of clubs, such as Leeds Rhinos Netball, offering specific sessions for boys. Single sex environments have been considered to be advantageous for women and girls to develop as athletes, but some have argued that this reinforces male superiority and female inferiority (Staurowsky, 2016). Netball does, however, challenge this stereotype, with opportunities for men and women to compete against one another in the many mixed netball leagues that run across the UK. Mixed games follow standard netball rules but typically state a maximum of three men playing on court at any time, with a restriction that two men are not permitted in either the shooting or defending circles. In this context, it is men who face gender stereotypes in terms of their masculinity, for example, in a New Zealand study Tagg (2008) reported how men were often labelled as 'effeminate' or 'gay cross-dressers' for playing netball.

Netball is one of the few team sport environments that is not influenced by the participation and interest of men (Marfell, 2017), which makes it a unique environment to study. Netball, therefore, has a complicated relationship with societal norms, both in the UK and globally, and can be viewed to have both facilitated women's participation in sport as well as constrained it, by being apologetic about female involvement, yet, empowering women by providing a socially acceptable sport for women to participate in. Although such gender stereotypes are continuously being challenged within sport, and growth has occurred for female sport participation, issues with equality persist (Staurowsky, 2016). Childhood involvement in sport, and parental influence, then, has an important role to play in addressing such inequalities.

2.5 Parental behaviour and childhood experiences

Most children will take part in some form of sports activity during their childhood, however, their levels of participation and the enjoyment they gain from it will vary significantly.

Although the benefits of sport participation are widely documented, not all children and adolescents have positive experiences. The quality of the experience can influence whether a child enjoys the activity and, therefore, links to continued participation (Bailey et al., 2015). Parental involvement varies greatly when children are participating in organised sport and can have a significant impact on the quality of a child's sporting experience in a variety of ways. The influence of family members, particularly parents, on youth sport participation and performance has been well established in the sporting literature, predominantly by Knight and colleagues (e.g. Knight et al., 2010; Knight et al., 2011; Knight and Holt, 2014; Harwood and Knight, 2015). Fewer studies, though, have explored this involvement in relation to continued adult participation. There are only a limited number of qualitative studies exploring childhood sport socialisation from the lifespan perspective to establish if and how childhood experiences shape adult participation, and even fewer studies investigating lifelong participation on women within team sport in the UK.

Once a child is engaged in a sport, parental support plays a large role in the child's experience and continued participation. There is growing evidence to suggest that, if the early experiences of children include participating in a variety of sports that are fun and enjoyable, they are likely to have greater positive experiences and increased developmental outcomes. In a quantitative study on youth participation in Swedish sports clubs Jakobsson et al. (2012) found that it was a particular group that remained as club-sport participants. This group already considered themselves to be extremely physically active at age 13 and had participated in a variety of sports with their parents to a greater degree than non-participants at the age of 16. They proposed that a special disposition towards sport was achieved through a greater experience of a variety of activities that increased physical competencies. However, the type of sports and clubs that the children engaged in was not differentiated, therefore, other factors may have influenced continued participation. For example, sports such as gymnastics and swimming require much greater time and training

demands than some team sports. In addition, the role of gender was not one of the aims of Jakobsson et al.'s research and was therefore not explored.

There exists a considerable body of literature on experiences of youth sport and in a qualitative investigation of adolescents' developmental experiences in swimming, Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) found that positive aspects included the special relationships the athletes developed with their parents as a result of swimming, as well as the family focus of the clubs encouraging parents and siblings to get involved in meets, fundraising, and club events. In contrast, some participants experienced negative relationships with parents, stating their parents pressured them to excel and some parents pressurised their children to stay involved in the sport. Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) concluded that, although there is a great deal of research in youth sport on parental roles, such as facilitating children's sport involvement (such as providing resources), and the psychosocial influences (including supporting, pressuring, role modelling) there is a need to use more innovative methodologies (for example, ethnography, journal use) to gain a deeper understanding of the ongoing interactions between adolescent athletes and their parents over time, in order to explore the nature and the development of these relationships further. In addition, parent-child interactions in team sports are not the same as they are in individual sports (Lauer et al., 2010) and so investigations into team sports and specifically female team sports will add to the existing literature.

In general, the family environment that appears to be most effective in encouraging a child to participate in sport is one which is caring and supportive and where sport is not taken too seriously (Allender et al., 2006). In a position statement on parenting expertise in youth sport Harwood and Knight (2015) identified six key postulates of parenting expertise: selecting appropriate sporting opportunities and providing essential types of support; understanding and applying appropriate parenting styles; managing the emotional demands of competitions; fostering healthy relationships with significant others; managing organisational and developmental demands associated with sport participation; and adapting their involvement to different stages of their child's athletic career. Yet, most parenting studies focus on youth participation rather than investigating the long-term implications for parenting behaviours and how this may shape an individual's continued

participation into adulthood. In addition, the holistic nature of the family and the influence of siblings is largely ignored.

2.6 Sporting siblings: role models and rivals

Much of the research to date has focused on the role of parents which has resulted in the marginalisation of siblings, when it is the sibling relationship that is often the longest relationship one shares and, therefore, has the potential to influence physical activity experiences from childhood throughout the life course (Osai and Whiteman, 2017; Blazo and Smith, 2018). Siblings are also important socialising agents and should be considered in relation to an individual's sport socialisation and their continued participation.

Several studies have shown that having a sibling who plays sport or is physically active increases the likelihood of participation and that older sibling sports participation increases the participation of younger siblings. This was demonstrated in an Australian study by Bagley et al. (2006), which gathered data using accelerometers and questionnaires. The results showed that girls without siblings were less active than those with a sibling. The impact of being an only child was also examined by Trent and Spitze (2011), who analysed data from The National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH). This American based study reported gender differences in sport participation for individuals who grew up with and without siblings. Adult men who grew up without siblings participated more frequently in sport compared to those who grew up with siblings. In contrast, women who grew up without siblings had lower sport participation levels. Gender differences were also evident in a US study by Davison (2004), which gathered data using surveys and self-report activity measures. Higher physical activity in girls was related to support from a brother or sister, although, for boys, higher physical activity was only associated with support from a brother. This suggested that boys were less likely to be influenced by the athletic ability of a sister than a brother. Gender effects were also evident in findings by Osai and Whiteman (2017) who reported that influences of siblings sports participation was evident only in siblings of the same gender. Although further qualitative investigation is needed taking into consideration the types of sports and childhood experiences, such findings indicated that gender role socialisation may differ between those with siblings and only children.

In a systematic review of siblings and physical activity experiences, Blazo and Smith (2018) concluded that being in a family with more siblings mostly positively associated with time engaged in playing sport or being physically active. This has been attributed to greater leisure time for physical activity with the presence of more children resulting in co-engaging. However, future work is needed to explore the impact of this on familial resources, as one would typically expect that more children within the family unit equate to less resources available per child. Greater diversity is also required, with the majority of physical activity sibling research involving mainly Caucasian, middle-class families (Blazo and Smith, 2018). The literature also reported that siblings are sources of both positive and negative sport experiences (Blazo and Smith, 2018). Positive and negative sibling impact also featured in the seminal study by Côté (1999) on family influences and athletic development, which involved interviews with 15 elite athletes. Results indicated that older siblings were viewed as positive role models for a work ethic, but, when an older sibling was successful in sport younger siblings often experienced bitterness and jealousy. This can be attributed to the uneven distribution of resources whereby the talented child receives more, creating resentment and tension between siblings (Côté and Hay, 2002). Birth order has also been associated with athletic differences, with suggestions that later-born children are more likely to perform at a higher level (Hopwood et al., 2015). One explanation offered by Carrette et al. (2011) to account for this statistic was that that first born children may focus more on their own development, whereas younger children compare themselves to older siblings, which results in firstborn children being more motivated to learn, whereas later born children possess a greater motivation to win (Carrette et al., 2011). Returning to the previous section on family resources, the birth order and number of siblings may also influence the amount of resources available for each child.

The influence of siblings was also reported within the previously discussed study by Lundy et al. (2019). Sibling influences were most evident during sport in the early years and grew from various common sources, such as shared sport experiences (both informal and organised sport), competition among siblings, and role modelling. Younger siblings benefitted, regardless of gender, from the exposure to their older sibling's sport experiences. Competition and rivalry between siblings were shown to have positive and negative effects. Positive experiences were achieved through influencing motivation,

whereby younger siblings sought to perform as well as, if not better than, an older sibling, but this was not necessarily always linked to sport, rather the creation of a general competitiveness. In contrast, negative experiences were cited by some younger siblings who felt overshadowed by older siblings. Further examination showed that although the family environment and values remained consistent the influence of parents and siblings varied in intensity and content throughout the participants' athletic development.

The consideration of socialisation processes involving siblings and how they influence one another's attitudes and participation in sport requires further examination (Osai and Whiteman, 2017). Research provides compelling evidence that siblings do influence one another's sport and physical activity involvement during childhood, yet, more investigation is required to explore how siblings affect activity levels and experiences, particularly relating to gender, sport choices and continued participation into adulthood. With shifting dynamics in female sport participation, the influence of female siblings is also likely to shift, allowing for greater potential through more female sibling role models and same-sex sibling influences. In addition to family influences other key stakeholders can also influence a child's sport participation.

2.7 Significant others: coaches, teachers and peers

To provide further understanding of the complex process of socialisation and youth sport experiences Evans et al. (2017) urged that researchers consider and study the variations in sport activities that affect youth sport experiences. More studies of everyday sports experiences should be undertaken within the social and cultural contexts in which they occur. In addition, the role of significant others such as coaches, PE teachers and peers should not be ignored. It is coaches as well as parents who are key people for children's everyday life in sports (Eliasson, 2015). The relationship between coaches, children and parents is often referred to as 'the sporting triangle'. Originally a term used by Byrne (1993), to conceptualise the socialisation between the children, coaches and parents, who are all part of the socialisation process within childhood sport. The variety and outcomes of interaction in the sporting triangle and its social system will impact a child's athletic development (Lisinskienė and Šukys, 2014), which in turn is likely to impact their continued participation. Sampling a range of sports during childhood, with the focus on appropriate

outcomes in terms of a child's development, are also associated with lifelong involvement in sport (Côté et al., 2011).

There has been extensive research conducted to gain a greater understanding of coaching expertise (Harwood and Knight, 2015). Literature suggests that it is the quality of relationships and communication between coaches, children and parents that facilitates positive development in youth sport (Lisinskienė and Šukys, 2014). In interviews with adolescent competitive swimmers, Fraser-Thomas and Côté (2009) examined athletes' feelings around coach behaviour and reported that all participants identified both positive and negative experiences. Most athletes commented on the special relationships they had with coaches, though many also mentioned coaches' intimidating demeanour, their preference for favourites, and their inappropriate behaviours. The conduct of sports coaches is a prevalent topic, with recent high profile cases of abuse appearing in the media in sports such as gymnastics and cycling (Scott, 2020). The coach is an integral part of a young athlete's participation and Navin (2016) suggested that coaches should focus less on winning and more on developing the individual holistically which also involves regular and clear communication with parents.

Alongside the relationships of coaches and parents is the interaction with peers and relationships with friends, which are vital to fully understand the social context of sport (Ullrich-French and Smith, 2006). With team sports, informal play and organised activities typically involving interaction with friends and classmates, peers often play a significant role in the physical activity of adolescents (Lawler et al., 2021). Close social relationships, such as parent and peer relationships, have been shown by Ullrich-French and Smith (2009) to be important in continued sport participation. In a review of literature that investigated social support and adolescent participation in sport Mendonça et al. (2014) reported that the social support from friends demonstrated the most consistent relationship to overall physical activity. Peer interaction, though, does not always constitute friendship and, as demonstrated in the study by Slater and Tiggemann (2011), can also lead to negative experiences such as teasing, which can lead to withdrawal from the sport.

Alongside youth sport, PE is also a valuable learning environment for children, but there is little research exploring the connection between the two settings (Na, 2015). In one of the very few studies linking the two, Kjønnsli et al. (2009), conducted a longitudinal study in Norway with participants completing questionnaires over a 10-year period, and found that both positive attitudes towards PE and participation in organised youth sports significantly predicted physical activity in adulthood. Furthermore, if girls actually enjoyed PE rather than just participated, they were more likely to be active at 23 years of age. In a qualitative US study examining parents' perceptions of their children's experiences in physical education and youth sport, Na (2015) found that parents judged youth sport to teach their children more than PE. The main variation between the two settings was the level of parental involvement in their children's experiences, with parental influence much higher in youth sport than in PE.

Longitudinal studies are less common, though in a Swedish study, Engström (2008) used postal questionnaires to contact individuals six times over a 38-year period. Results found a significant association between the extent of leisure-time sporting experience and physical education grades, with late adulthood exercise habits. Engström's findings indicated that breadth and variation in sports experiences during childhood had a positive impact on exercise participation later in life. This work showed support for what Engström (2008) termed a 'sport' habitus (which will be discussed further in Chapter 3), which suggested that an individual's habitus towards sport is shaped by their experiences of participating in a variety of sports activities both at school and during their leisure time. These findings were replicated by Stuij (2015) who reported differences in habitus formation between children who supplemented PE with regular formal youth sports (typically children with higher SES) and children who only engaged in informal activities and PE. Results suggested that the former was more likely to facilitate a habitus of regular sport and exercise in the form of adult sports club memberships. Other studies show little or no evidence that PE influences regular physical activity participation (Green, 2014). Therefore, it seems questionable whether PE serves as a sufficient preparation for participation in sports clubs. In addition, when considering such evidence this should be done so alongside the acknowledgement of the socio-political and cultural context of sport in that country. Further longitudinal and biographical research investigating the continuation of engaging young people in sport is

required, to increase understanding of how PE interventions might operate to increase engagement in youth sport with the ultimate aim of lifelong participation (Green, 2014).

2.8 Summary of part 1

The research presented in this part of the chapter has provided evidence that the family (inclusive of both parents and siblings) play a vital role in a child's level of physical activity and their participation in organised sports. The value placed upon sport and physical activity in the family home, and the availability and distribution of resources appears key to the provision of sports opportunities for children and supporting their participation.

Traditionally, gender has been an influential factor in mediating such distribution and provision, however, the constantly changing social environment appears to be shifting, with greater equality in the familial provision and support for both girls and boys to participate in sport. Gender influences do, though, remain apparent with mothers typically being more involved in their daughters' sport than their sons', and gender stereotypes influencing the choice of activity for girls and boys, with many sports still labelled as feminine or masculine in society.

Gender appropriateness of sports are also reinforced by the national curriculum where in schools boys and girls participate in gender associated sports. Additional layers of societal prejudice become evident when individuals choose to participate in sports deemed incongruous to their own gender. For example, the 'gay' label applied to men playing netball or the masculine characterisation of female rugby players. Even within those activities labelled as 'gender appropriate' many girls still experience conflicting principles involving athletic prowess and muscularity for performance versus the feminine bodily ideal. Such gender stereotypes are often conveyed during childhood and so consequently families and significant others such as coaches, PE teachers and peers, all have a role to play in influencing a child's sports experiences and their continued participation. During childhood an individual's socialisation into sport and how they make sense of their participation is complex and influenced by so many different factors and it is during these childhood experiences that the foundations and bedrock of adult participation are already being formed.

Part 2: Negotiating sport into adulthood: a lifespan perspective

There are many intra-personal, social, and environmental factors that influence an individual's engagement in physical activity, and these will fluctuate across the life course (Sallis et al., 2000; Lim et al., 2011). Factors that influence physical activity behaviour can be classified as non-modifiable (e.g. age, ethnicity), or modifiable, which includes a range of personal factors (e.g. attitudes, motives), the social environment (e.g. family, peers), and the physical environment (e.g. accessibility of sport facilities, proximity of sports clubs) (Zimmermann-Sloutskis et al., 2010). For example, individuals with higher SES are likely to engage in more active leisure time than those of lower SES (Stalsberg and Pedersen, 2018). Despite recent attempts by women to gain equality in sport numerous barriers remain in place. One key factor to consider regarding equality in adult sport participation is whether women are provided with equal opportunities with men to participate in leisure activities. Over time, an extensive range of studies have explored the constraints of women's leisure participation and also how women negotiate such constraints (Wood and Danylchuk, 2012). Constraints refer to factors that restrict participation, and negotiation strategies are the means by which individuals lessen the impact of such constraints (Wood and Danylchuk, 2012). This section critically evaluates the literature exploring influencing factors on adult female sports participation, drawing from literature conducted over the past twenty years, beginning with the transition from junior to adult sport.

2.9 Life transitions

The transition from junior-to-senior sport may lead players to experience higher levels of competition and an increase in training intensity, which can be physically and mentally challenging (Drew et al., 2019). This transition often arrives at a time where other transitions are taking place simultaneously, such as academic and social transitions (Wylleman and Lavalley, 2004). In a qualitative investigation that explored the transition from junior to senior sport, Pummell et al. (2008) interviewed 10 young event riders. Results showed that parents and peers were important, as they often encouraged the riders to make the transition and facilitated this motivation by offering social support. Socio-cultural factors also play a large role in such transitions. For instance, in America the college system can mean that athletes may be in their early 20s before making the transition to senior sport (Drew et al., 2019). Within the UK, university sport can also bridge that gap between

junior and senior level, but this offers its own set of transition challenges. For example, in a UK qualitative case study, Brown et al. (2015) reported that, when starting at university, student-athletes experienced changes in their coach, a reduction in the parental support offered, and a requirement to enter into new friendships. Much of the research on junior to senior transitions, though, has occurred with a focus on elite and talented performers rather than recreational sport. Furthermore, in their review of qualitative research on the junior-to-senior transition in sport, Drew et al. (2019) highlighted the failure of the literature to specifically address the transitions of female participants.

Transitions at key life stages and the reorientation of identity during these transitions pose key barriers to participation, particularly when applied to teenage girls and young women (Allender et al., 2006). Even young women who participate in sport regularly document certain transitions within education, or from education to work, which have a negative impact on their sports participation (Cox et al., 2006). The relationship between major life events and sports participation was explored by van Houten et al. (2015) using large scale data from the Dutch SportersMonitor for surveying 3540 young adults (aged 18-35 years). Findings indicated that when young adults began work, started living on their own, or moved in with a partner or got married then they were at a higher risk of stopping their sport. Similarly, when young adults moved out to live by themselves, with a partner or got married, the risk of cancelling their sports membership increased. The birth of the first child increased the likelihood of discontinuing a sport and terminating club membership for young women, but not for young men. Therefore, young women not only discontinue participation in their sport, but also withdraw from a community of fellow sportspeople.

Prior to giving birth, pregnancy may feature as a barrier to a woman's sport and physical activity participation. Guidance from the NHS (2020) advises pregnant women to refrain from any contact sports that pose a risk of being struck, which applies to many sports. Regulations from governing bodies typically recommend pregnant members seek advice and approval from a doctor prior to participation in competitive sport. For instance, England Netball (EN) previously advised that "players, coaches, officials should only participate up until their 12th week of pregnancy", however, in 2016 they changed their guidance to "EN recommends that individuals (player, coach, umpire) if pregnant should only participate

with approval from their doctor and in accordance with any guidelines issued by EN” (England Netball, 2016). Pregnancy, for some women, acts not only as a barrier to competitive sport participation but as an obstacle to being physically active in general. Studies of physical activity during pregnancy are well documented and evidence from a review by Coll et al. (2017) found that barriers included: pregnancy-related symptoms and limitations; time constraints; perceptions of already being active; lack of motivation; and concerns over mother-child safety. Pregnancy, however, is a personal experience for each individual and the choices made typically reflect the individual’s health and their tastes and dispositions towards sport and physical activity.

Following the birth of a child, the demands of becoming a parent and organising a household whilst often working in a paid role have shown over time to negatively impact on women’s leisure time to a greater extent than men’s, causing a reduction in the time that women have available to participate in sport (Bittman and Wajcman, 2000; Sayer, 2005; Bellows-Riecken and Rhodes, 2008; Sayer, 2016). This dual burden, or ‘second shift’ as referred to by Hochschild (1989), describes the situation whereby women who work to gain a salary are also responsible for the majority of household and domestic duties. Where women are engaged in this dual role of both paid and domestic labour they face an impact on not only their time to engage in sport and physical activity but also their energies to do so (Scruton and Flintoff, 2013). As Wood and Danylchuk (2012, p. 466) describe:

women are socialised to put others’ needs ahead of their own, and this increased caring behavior and sense of responsibility for others often results in women not developing their own needs or a sense of entitlement to leisure for themselves.

Even for those women who do feel a sense of entitlement to leisure, some (mainly those with children) report experiencing feelings of guilt for taking time away from family or home duties to participate in their own activities (Roster, 2007). This can influence the type of leisure activity women engage with. For example, in a UK mixed method study, gathering qualitative data from a group of six first-time mothers, Horne et al. (2005) reported that women’s leisure activities occurred around the home rather than activities such as frequenting the gym and playing sport. Women may also select activities that they can control. This was evident in a study by Bond and Batey (2005) who interviewed sixteen

English female recreational runners. Findings showed that the women prioritised the needs of other family members over their own running and typically fitted their running around the schedule of others. Thus, individual activities are perhaps less complicated to negotiate than the more rigid routines and schedules of participation in team sports. More recent investigations into the nature of leisure experiences by Codina and Pestana (2019) reported that although men had more leisure time, women gained greater enjoyment from their leisure time. This poses links to research by O'Brien et al. (2017) that explored the emotions and spaces created during leisure time physical activity, where findings indicated that for each woman leisure time held its own meaning, and provided space to think and feel differently which, over time, enhanced their embodied and emotional well-being. The notion of space also featured in a study by Spowart et al. (2010) who explored the experiences of a 'surfing mums' group in New Zealand. Findings revealed that, although the women cherished motherhood, the attraction of surfing was that it provided a break from familial responsibilities. In contrast, the accounts of women presented in a UK-based study by Wattis et al. (2013) indicated that for many women negotiating leisure time above and beyond work and family does not feature in their busy lives. For those women that did strive to achieve a balance between work, family, and leisure, the findings suggested that rather than gaining the relaxation and personal satisfaction sought, it simply created an additional demand and stress on the women.

Returning to the concept of equality in leisure time there are contradictory findings in the research with some studies reporting that the barriers of time, money and family commitments impacted both male and female sports participation (Lim et al., 2011), as well as research citing no connection between physical activity and getting married or cohabiting (King et al., 1998; Hull et al., 2010) or even having a child (Blum et al., 2004). The women in Blum et al.'s (2004) American based study, reported, via questionnaires, that support from the partner/husband or family and friends was extremely important in enabling them to participate in sport and exercise post pregnancy. Indeed, the development and maintenance of social support networks are strong influencers of participation (Allender et al., 2006). This was demonstrated in a mixed methods study of Australian young mothers by Brown et al. (2001) whereby a lack of time, money, energy and ideological influences were cited as key constraints, but the social support from partners, family, and friends enabled these

constraints to be more negotiable. The study also provided further insight as the women in their study who received the most support from family and friends were also those with a higher SES, suggesting links between high SES and a larger social network. Returning to the surfing study by Spowart et al. (2010) the majority of women in this group, although from an affluent area, did not feel that it was appropriate to pay for childcare to pursue their own leisure interests. However, like those women in Brown et al.'s (2001) study, these women had the social support to be able to participate without the need for paid childcare, except for one participant. SES, therefore, appears to be not only a critical factor in relation to child physical activity, but also in adult physical activity and recreational sport in particular. Providing links between the two, Cheval et al. (2018) conducted a large scale, European ten-year population-based cohort study, with repeated measurements in five waves, every two years. Results indicated that SES in early life is also shown to impact adult physical inactivity. The study showed an increased risk of physical inactivity for women with the most disadvantaged early-life socioeconomic circumstances, though, results also revealed that education is a strong mediator in lowering the risks associated with these early life effects.

It is the culmination and crossover between a vast array of social constructs that pose the unique barriers that can negatively impact on the sports involvement of women and girls (Daniels, 2016). An intersectional approach considers these social constructs such as race, ethnicity, class and gender and how they interact to create groups organised around concepts of power and oppression (Seal, 2012). Feminist theorists within sport and physical education have started to consider an intersectional approach to view the complexities of gender in sport alongside other social constructs (Scruton and Flintoff, 2013). Gaining a retrospective lifespan perspective can provide further information on how life transitions, involving a range of intersected factors, can impact physical activity and sport participation. Findings from one such study by Wong et al. (2018), which involved focus groups with older American female softball players (aged 55-79 years), indicated that transitions across the lifespan shaped the women's participation in competitive softball. The main transitions discussed by the women were those linked to social factors (such as becoming a parent, getting married) and health (including experiencing a health illness or injury). Most of the women had participated in team sports throughout their lives and so had developed a lifelong relationship with competitive sport, which may also have been a contributing factor.

The majority of studies exploring motherhood and sport have typically investigated the constraints experienced by women that negatively impact physical activity participation, as opposed to exploring how women negotiate these constraints to facilitate their participation (Spowart et al., 2010). In addition, fewer studies have been conducted exploring female recreational team sports participants and, as Batey and Owton (2014, p. 5) acknowledged, mothers who maintain participation in team sports are, “a unique group to study”. Investigating this group of women further to learn how they manage to negotiate familial, work and lifestyle responsibilities, alongside their own desire for team sport competition, may help to inform interventions to encourage more women to continue to play team sports throughout adulthood and during major life transitions.

2.10 Team sports: Is ‘we’ better than ‘me’?

Team-based sport not only brings about beneficial effects on physical performance, but also on well-being and motivation (Hornstrup et al., 2018). Studies researching women’s well-being have, according to Horne et al. (2005), reported maintaining social relationships as an important constant factor. This craving for social interaction also impacts activity choice, evident in the previously mentioned research by Russell (2002) where team membership was documented by the women in the study as the most important reason why they engaged in UK netball. From a Bourdieusian perspective these social connections and social networks and the benefits both of these bring about illustrates the role that sport can play in the development of social capital (Hoye et al., 2015) (which is discussed further in Chapter 3). Still, Tacon (2019) argued that more research is needed to explain how such social capital develops.

There is a growing body of research exploring the benefits of team sport participation for women and in particular the link to continued participation. For instance, a combined qualitative and quantitative study by Ottesen et al. (2010) found that for a group of physically inactive Danish women aged 19-47 years, who took part in a 16-week programme of running or football, football led to the development of greater social capital than running, which overall led to better social outcomes. In addition, one year following the intervention it was only the team players that had continued to play football at the local club. This

reinforced findings that the social context of team sport promotes adherence. The women who participated in football also ranked having fun as a higher priority than those in the running intervention, which may also help to explain greater adherence. Studies that explored team sports in older women have also cited social connection and a sense of belonging as important factors in their participation (e.g. Wong et al., 2018), where the commitment and community of being part of a team offered a unique and rewarding experience that encouraged continued participation (Kirby and Kluge, 2013). This was further supported by Wikman et al. (2018) who, in their quantitative study, found that the team sport of floorball (a Hockey-like team sport from Sweden played indoors) provided greater motivation for middle-aged women than the activity of spinning, particularly intrinsic motivation, which is associated with continued participation.

In a review of literature exploring the social and psychological health outcomes of participation in team sports, Andersen et al. (2019) identified the most widely reported health outcomes to include: emotional social support; sense of belonging; higher self-esteem; social network; and social interaction. In addition, exploring the literature surrounding continued participation, the review identified two sub-themes that were essential to the participants' continued participation. These were the social context of team sport and team sport as an enjoyable and meaningful activity. Overall, the review concluded that there was 'extensive support' for the role of team sport in encouraging engagement and maintaining long-term participation in physical activity. This contrasts with the principle that participating in a team sport reduces an individual's control, such as when and where the team train, and the dates, times, and venues of fixtures. One such explanation offered by Cronin et al. (2019) in their study of UK B2N participants, was that the women personalised their netball participation through choosing the competition intensity at which they played and considered their own individual ability and competitive ambitions to inform their choices. There is, though, a lack of studies that focus on how women negotiate their participation in team sports and the factors that influence their participation at the different stages of their lives. There are also few studies on the culture of female recreational team sports and women's experiences of socialisation into sports teams and clubs.

2.10.1 Becoming one of the team

The literature identified so far has demonstrated team participation as eliciting positive benefits for participation and continuation, yet, becoming part of a team is not always a straightforward occurrence. Much of the literature surrounding the dynamics of sports teams arises in the sports psychology field and has direct implications for performance rather than adherence. Although the investigation of group properties is a key feature of sociological study Halldorsson et al. (2017, p. 1282) claimed that there is “a lack of systematic attention to the topic of teamwork in sport”. One such study by Donnelly and Young (1988), grounded within evidence from a range of ethnographic studies in sports subcultures, proposed a four-stage process exploring how individuals develop subcultural identities to cement their membership within a group: pre-socialisation; selection and recruitment; socialisation and acceptance/ostracism. The pre-socialisation stage involves the individual gaining as much information as they can from a variety of sources about the subculture. Selection and recruitment are where the individual becomes a member of the subculture, through the means of opportunity, motivation and interest. Socialisation is an important sociological concept and is ongoing, during which the individual learns to assume the values and perspectives of the group, fulfils new roles and shapes others, often leading to a new concept of self. Finally, acceptance occurs when the individual fits the general values and fulfils the role required by the group. If socialisation is not successful, and identity and role conflicts occur, then the individual may encounter ostracism from the group.

Bridging the gap in sociological literature Halldorsson et al. (2017) conducted a case study of two Icelandic sport teams: the Iceland men’s national handball team and an Icelandic women’s gymnastics team. The results indicated an ‘invisible force of team culture’ where each team had their own ‘idioculture’ (that is shared knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs) which players adhered to, and new players needed to conform to. The senior players viewed themselves as guardians of this team culture and educated the younger players into it. The study reported that, although players held shared ideas and beliefs and always presented a united front in public, they were also aware that certain behaviours, such as competition in training and injury troubles, should be kept ‘backstage’. The team functioned as coordinating individuals, with individual agency also a feature whereby some

individuals naturally took on leadership roles. Halldorsson et al. (2017, p. 1292) concluded that “team culture, solidarity and performance are dynamic processes that involve self-presentation, negotiation of meaning, and improvising successful performances”.

Intra-group relations such as cohesiveness and player hierarchies are important for sport teams (Lusher et al., 2010) with teams possessing a division of labour where some players are more dominant than others. Within a team the various members will hold different social positions with varying rights, obligations and duties. This includes formal relations, such as between the captain and players as well as informal relations, such as friendships, between team members that will impact how a team operates (Lusher et al., 2010). These relationships are often captured in the discursive exchanges between players and dictate one’s social position within the team. The interdependency of team players should also be acknowledged (Lusher et al., 2010). For instance, in netball a shooter cannot score without the other players on the team being successful in passing them the ball, conversely the team will never be successful if the shooters are not accurate. In the context of team sport, social positioning is therefore a complex and dynamic process. Alongside an individual’s positioning with the team the overall culture of the club should also be considered.

2.11 Sports clubs: a role to play in continued participation

Players are typically subject to a wider community of club membership when part of a team. Being part of a sports club is associated with greater levels of improved psychological and social health than other individual forms of physical activity (Eime et al., 2010). A significant proportion of sports participation in England is via sports clubs run by their members and, for that reason, such clubs are key to government policy to increase participation (Nichols et al., 2012). Sport clubs can also play a crucial role in the provision of competitive sport beyond school and, therefore, are vital in supporting the transition from school to club/adult sports (e.g. Collins and Buller, 2000; Eime and Payne, 2009; Wolman and Fraser-Thomas, 2017). They provide important spaces for individuals to form social ties and the development of social capital and the way the club is structured and its culture influences the types of social ties that its members develop (Tacon, 2019). Strong ties are formed when individuals develop tight bonds, share intimate feelings, provide mutual emotional support and typically interact in more than one social context (Tacon, 2019). In contrast, weak ties

are looser and offer more informational than emotional support, often acting as bridges to other social networks (Tacon, 2019).

Through providing individuals with a sense of community and belonging (Fraser-Thomas and Côté, 2009) sports clubs can help to develop social ties and promote adherence. This was demonstrated in a South African, qualitative study of a youth soccer programme by Draper and Coalter (2016), where almost all players referred to a sense of family and home, as well as a bond between players, volunteers and staff. Similarly, a study by Spencer-Cavaliere et al. (2015) who gathered data from interviews, participant journals and reflective notes with Canadian female ultra frisbee players, found the women frequently cited social interaction and friendship as key reasons for participating in sport. The study also highlighted the importance of the overall aims of the club aligning with those of the individual and that the organisation of the club allows for such social ties to be created. For example, if the participants join the club mainly for social interaction but the culture created at the club is aimed at winning at all costs then this may not encourage continued participation.

To investigate the nature of sports club membership, qualitative studies are required to capture the complexities and nuances of human behaviour and experience, including the social positioning of its members. For example, a feminist ethnographic study, conducted by Middleton (1986), was based in a Yorkshire village where she lived alongside the villagers, which afforded her a detailed view of the villagers' lives. Middleton observed the male patriarchy of the village to revolve around the cricket club and documented how the men used cricket to assert their dominance, while the women fulfilled roles such as making the tea, cleaning and wash up, before returning at the end of the game to pick up their husbands and boyfriends. More recently, Forsdike et al. (2019) employed ethnography to study fifteen women at a field hockey club in Australia. From their data on the athletes' experiences three key themes were presented: experiences of unity; family-like practices; and belonging. Within the theme of unity, camaraderie featured throughout, although, some of the older players described that the increasing size of the club and the ambition to play at a higher level meant that individualism was becoming more prominent, with everyone out for their own gain. This was reflected in the authors' observations of how upon arrival at training the women went to one side or the other based on their skill level,

which removed any potential for social connection. Furthermore, although all players paid the same fees the more able players tended to receive more resources and more coach time. Some of the women described the club as family, offering emotional and material support, and some players had helped to finance the club out of their personal funds. Like any family, things do not always run smoothly, and the older players commented that they were doing the bulk of the work with younger players not contributing. Players also described being a member of the club as 'belonging' and this was particularly evident for those players who had moved to the area and did not have any family locally. This sense of belonging was much more evident amongst the older players, although, with the influx of more players this was changing. In contrast, one younger player felt excluded by the older players arranging social events and only inviting selective people. This study by Forsdike et al. (2019) showed how the cultural changes within a club can impact upon members and illustrated how sports clubs are dynamic, ever-changing environments that the members are continuously responding and reacting to.

More recently media discussion has focused on the rights of women to feel safe and the role of sport to provide safe spaces where women can be themselves and feel empowered. As a predominantly female sport, netball has been highlighted as a safe space for women (Sky Sports, 2021). To date the nature of recreational sports club membership has only been assessed to a very limited extent within female team sport. In particular, as recreational netball clubs within the UK are typically small, are focussed entirely on adult participation and do not own their own facilities (Nichols et al., 2012), there is a need for specific further inquiry into such a distinctive culture.

2.11.1 The netball coach

As previously discussed regarding youth sport, the coach is an important and influential figure, and this remains the case in adult participation. The role of the coach and their influence on an individual's experiences of sports participation is extremely powerful and understanding the relationship between coaching and women's sport participation is important (Cronin et al., 2019). Returning to the study by Cronin et al. (2019), B2N participants reported that coaches often facilitated or helped to advise them to engage in competition relevant to their ability, and, through their knowledge of the local netball

community, were able to direct players to a range of opportunities. In addition to this, the coaches were often perceived as being caring and showing empathy, listening and engaging in dialogue with participants. In contrast, coaches were also cited to have a negative influence on some individual's sport experiences and, in this instance, a laissez faire style of coaching led to a minority of the participants having a negative experience, with more dominant group members taking over. Coaching was also shown to be a key engagement facilitator by Whitehead et al. (2019) in their study investigating B2N, where coaches provided opportunities for participants to develop their competence. Currently netball coaching remains relatively underexplored in academic literature (Cronin et al., 2019), particularly compared to other sports and within recreational adult participation.

2.12 Connecting the parts: from child to adult

Collating the evidence so far from Part 1 and Part 2, this section aims to connect the past and the present. This aligns with a number of authors who have begun to recognise the importance of links between childhood experiences of sport and adult participation (e.g. Tammelin et al., 2005; Scheerder et al., 2006; Birchwood et al., 2008; Haycock and Smith, 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2018), which has drawn attention to the socio-cultural perspective of sport participation. The family sport culture for the engagement of young people in sport and their continued participation can be explained and understood through applying Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus' (Strandbu et al., 2020). Literature discussing sport socialisation is often contained within psychological journals, however, the sociocultural perspective positions children as actively participating in the construction of childhood (Eliasson, 2015). Supporting this view of sport socialisation Dixon et al. (2008, p. 539) proposed that socialisation is:

more than simply exposing individuals to different activities or opportunities (e.g. maths, science, sports) rather it is an active social process whereby values and norms are transmitted, taught, and hopefully adopted by the individuals being socialised.

Childhood socialisation into sport and maintaining an active lifestyle follows the concept of 'family habitus' (Coakley, 2006; DeLuca, 2016) and although Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been widely applied to the sport domain, there has been limited consideration of the concept of 'family habitus' (DeLuca, 2016).

Bourdieu proposed that behaviour is directed by the habitus, which forms an unconscious basis for behaviour, thoughts and emotions in every possible situation (Stuij, 2015). As such, the characteristics of early socialisation are largely determined by the family culture and form the basis of all subsequent experiences. For example, Birchwood et al. (2008) suggested that, by the age of 16, an individual will already have acquired crucial predispositions to participate in sport from their family, which have lasting effects. A qualitative study on primary school children in North Wales by Wheeler (2012), also found support for the creation of 'habitus'. Results revealed sporting cultures (beliefs and behaviours relating to sport) were transmitted through the family. Parents formed specific goals and strategies for their children's sport participation, which were informed through their own sport experiences. Either wishing their child to experience something they had not, or by wanting their child to have similar experiences to their own, which suggests that both sporty and non-sporty parents can raise sporty children.

Although youth sports participation, parental involvement and sports socialisation has been extensively explored within the literature, this is predominantly psycho-social in its perspective. The socio-cultural conditions and the variety of experiences gained from participating in specific sports are also important to consider (Engström, 2008). There are still questions regarding childhood influences and continued participation into adulthood that need to be investigated further, particularly in relation to gender and specific sports contexts. The suggestion by Engström (2008) that a deeper qualitative investigation exploring the habitus and sports participation of individuals should be undertaken is relevant to this study.

2.13 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has critically reviewed the literature to consider how socialisation into sport as a child and childhood experiences of sport may potentially impact women's sport participation into adulthood. As part of this discussion the term 'gender' has been examined along with a consideration of the relationship between gender, femininities and masculinities, and sport participation throughout the lifespan. The structure and resources of the family have been identified as key factors that influence the opportunities provided

to a child to participate in sport, with a focus on gender influences. This literature review has exposed links between the different forms of capital and parental power in the distribution of such capital. Once participating in sport, it is parental behaviour, alongside that of significant others, that may impact a child's sporting experience and their continued participation. Consideration has also been given to the impact of societal changes and key transitions in women's lives and the impact of this on leisure time, which also links to forms of capital, power and dominance. Literature examining the participation of women in team sports has been critically evaluated alongside the culture of sports clubs and community and their role in continued participation. Figure 2.1 summarises the nature of the literature reviewed.

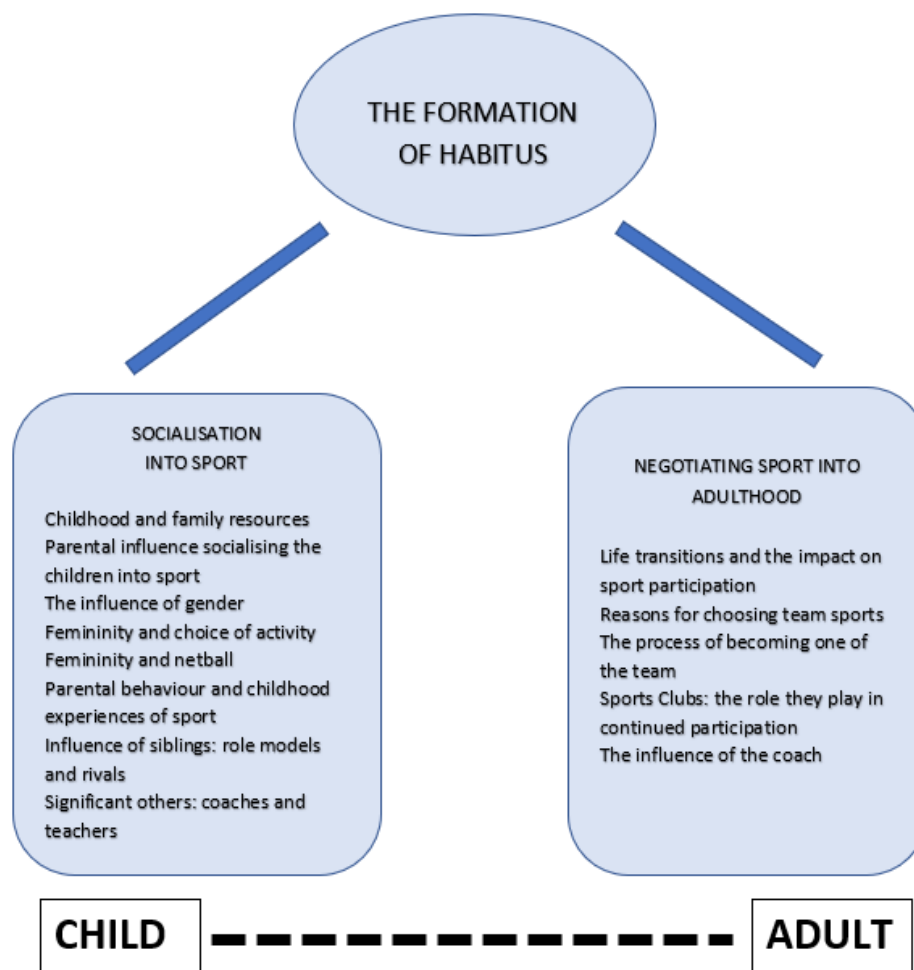


FIGURE 2.1 A SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEWED WITHIN THIS CHAPTER

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the formation of habitus is a very dynamic and complex process informed by a range of influences and processes which constantly evolves as society does. People are the product of their past, a past in which they have been moulded by many social, cultural, psychological and economic processes. Yet, at present, there is very little literature that unifies these processes to evidence how they affect adult participation in sport, and even fewer focusing on specific contexts or sporting populations. The existing literature, discussed throughout this chapter, demonstrates a shortage of sociological investigations into the impact of childhood sports experiences on adult participation, with the application of such studies to the context of recreational female team sport even more scarce. The prevalence of netball as the most popular female team sport in England is not reflected in the current research literature, particularly when addressing the issue of female sports participation. The lack of sociological research into recreational female team sports is addressed by this study which bridges the gaps identified in existing literature, specifically the investigation of female sports participation across the lifespan using a sociological lens. This chapter has indicated strong links between research into sports participation and the theoretical concepts of Bourdieu. Given the importance of Bourdieu's work to this thesis the next chapter provides a detailed overview of his contribution to the discipline of sociology and the analysis of social relationships.

Chapter 3: A Theoretical Lens: the application of Bourdieu

3.1 Introduction

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is considered to be one of the most influential scholars and social theorists globally, making a vast impact in the world of academia (Tomlinson, 2004) and beyond. Bourdieu has published extensively, applying his work to a variety of disciplines (Laberge and Kay, 2002), including the field of sport (Bourdieu, 1978; Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1988), whereby he was one of the first sociologists to address sport as “a serious sociological issue” (Tomlinson, 2004, p. 164). Bourdieu considered the choice of sports pursued by different social classes and the designed benefits of these sports between the classes (Williams, 1995). A large number of existing theoretical and empirical studies in the sociology and sport literature, such as those introduced in Chapter 2, have examined Bourdieu’s theories in relation to their contribution to the sociology of sport, including the development of social capital (e.g. Ottesen et al., 2010; Forsdike et al., 2019), Physical Education (e.g. Brown, 2005; Evans and Davies, 2010), socialisation into sport (e.g. Wheeler and Green, 2014; Wheeler and Green, 2019), and gender (e.g. Laberge, 1995; Thorpe, 2009), with some drawing on Bourdieu’s theories to examine and research long-term sports participation (e.g. Engström, 2008). This chapter discusses the overarching theoretical framework for the study, Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of practice and his three related constructs of field, habitus and capital. Bourdieu’s theory of practice provides a lens through which the discussion from Chapter 2 on female participation in recreational club sport can be extended, to bring together findings from the literature on socialisation, gender, and lifelong participation.

3.2 Applying Bourdieu’s theory of practice

The reason that Bourdieu’s theory of practice (1984) is so applicable to the study of sport is due to its acknowledgement of the value of social influences and experiences and how they act together to shape an individual’s world. Within this theory Bourdieu recognised three key theoretical and “thinking tools” that are linked; field, habitus and capital (Wacquant, 1989, p. 50) and it is “the two-way relationship between objective structures (those of social fields) and incorporated structures (those of habitus)” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. vii) that provide

the basis of the theory. The relationship between the three tools is illustrated by Bourdieu (1984, p. 95) in the rule, “ [(habitus) + (capital)] + field = practice”.

Practice, in this instance, is represented by human behaviour and interactions and Bourdieu recognised the significance of understanding human behaviour and the social space in which it happens, that is, within the field. The field is “the objective network or configuration of relations [...] to be found in any social space or particular context” (Grenfell, 2014a, p. 47). It is the interaction between an individual’s disposition (habitus) and position (capital) within the field that dictates practice. For instance, there are enduring and distinct differences in the sporting choices of different classes according to taste and style, such as those in the dominant classes playing golf, polo and tennis (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu’s theory of practice (1984) provides a useful lens through which to view sports participation experiences and the key factors that influence these. Nevertheless, as Tomlinson (2004) advised, sport does not occur in isolation, but is shaped by a range of cultural and social factors and, therefore, “to understand a sport, whatever it may be, one must locate its position in the space of sports” (Bourdieu, 1988, p. 153).

The work of the sociologist consists of identifying the socially pertinent properties that make for an affinity between a given sport and the interests, tastes and preferences of a definite social category.

(Bourdieu, 1988, p. 154).

Bourdieu also warned researchers not to assume a direct relationship between a sport and a social position (Bourdieu, 1998). In summary, Tomlinson (2004, p. 164) proposed that “to understand the meaning of a sporting practice, it is necessary to look at when and how a sport was learnt, how it is played, in what context it is played and how often it is played”. For example, netball can be viewed as a traditionally feminine and gender appropriate sport, played by most girls in English schools across all social classes.

3.3 Society: fields and power

In his work, Bourdieu (1977) proposed that society comprises a number of varied and overlapping fields. Fields are occupied by both individuals and institutions (for example, sports clubs and schools) and are not neutral spaces, but are made up of hierarchies of

power and positions of varying status (Bourdieu, 1977). The family, occupied with individuals with each member possessing their own volume and structure of capital, functions as a field (Bourdieu, 1998). Individuals practice in a range of different fields and these fields are often autonomous, however, they are all structured by hierarchies of power, and together they form the individual's total social space which determines their status, class and social position (Alanen et al., 2015). Bourdieu is resolute in his thinking that some fields are dominant whilst others are subordinate, though, the clarity of how such domination is portrayed is not clear (Thomson, 2014).

Fields are also considered to be dynamic (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) and the individuals and groups within each field exert effort to alter or maintain the structure of power. Fields exist alongside one another, they overlap, and subfields may form within larger fields, each with its own rules, or logic, known as doxa (Alanen et al., 2015). The game and rules vary between those in other fields. Whereby the 'game' in the field refers to the activities of those within the field to establish and control the type of capital that is considered valuable and viewed as acceptable in the field (Alanen et al., 2015). For example, Dagkas and Quarmby (2015) suggested that the interconnecting fields of family, schooling and peer culture influence an individual's inclination towards being physically active. Team sports players will also be operating in interconnecting fields, within this their club will constitute a field, with different teams forming sub-fields within the club, each with its own set of rules, or doxa. Within each of these fields the players will be continuously vying to either maintain or change the hierarchy of power that exists. Multiple fields with multiple habituses can prove methodologically challenging, as McRobbie (2009, p. 141) acknowledged, "it is easy to get lost in a proliferation of fields", particularly when the field is considered amongst wider social, cultural and political fields. In response to this, others suggest Bourdieu's theory should be used as a more general 'thinking tool' to apply to an empirical situation, rather than seek to provide an exact definitively explained framework (Thorpe, 2009). It is this latter perspective that has been adopted within this study, where Bourdieu's theory is used as a more general thinking tool applied to the research as opposed to fitting the research to the framework.

3.4 The accumulation of capital

All three 'thinking tools' are interrelated and the interaction between an individual's habitus and capital within the field dictates practice. Therefore, strong associations exist between capital and habitus (Yang, 2014) and "a capital does not exist and function except in relation to a field" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 101). In Bourdieu's theory, there are three main forms of capital: economic, cultural and social (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital includes money and disposable assets, social capital is formed of social connections such as people we know, and cultural capital relates to how to behave, dress, speak and typically how to conduct oneself in society. These different forms of capital all carry value that, when applied to a specific field, can be converted into what is called 'symbolic capital'.

Cultural capital is perhaps the most widely known concept of Bourdieu and this exists in forms of knowledge, skill, understanding and education, entrenched in the family 'habitus' and can be used to render one group more socially superior than another (Coalter, 2007). There exist three forms of cultural capital: the embodied state such as enduring traits of the mind and body; the objectified state, denoted by cultural goods; and in the institutionalised state, for instance, academic attainment (Bourdieu, 1986). Individuals that are brought up in families with greater economic and cultural capital, such as better resources and a vested interest in their development, are considered at an advantage. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, individuals from high SES backgrounds are more likely to engage in physical activity. Cultural capital is also beneficial for developing networks which may enhance the development of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which, as demonstrated in the findings by Brown et al. (2001) of their study on young mothers, may be a key factor in female sports participation.

Social capital typically refers to the social networks available within social and group norms where individuals develop trust and cooperation allowing individuals and/or groups to gain particular types of advantage (Coalter, 2007). The trust and relationships within the social network generate capital. Bourdieu (1986, pp. 248-249) defined social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition ... which provides each of its members with the

backing of the collectively owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the term.

The concept of social capital applies at individual, institutional and societal levels, and any advantage the individual gains is also said to benefit the wider group with group gains also benefitting the individual (Forsdike et al., 2019). With the concept of social capital relevant to the social context in which sport is played, and the dynamic nature of relationships and individual experiences within sport, there is still a lack of qualitative empirical studies of social capital, particularly longitudinal studies (Crabbe, 2008). Most studies reflect a point in time rather than examining how social capital may evolve over time. To address this gap in the literature Forsdike et al. (2019) suggested more studies were needed within the field of sport and social capital research and, with little known about the experiences of social capital for women, specifically more studies within women's sport participation.

These three forms of capital create meaning which is reflected in symbolic capital, and it is this symbolic capital which assigns an individual a valid position within the specific field. This position is allocated relative to other individuals also participating in the field and assigned according to the specific doxa of the field. Symbolic capital relates to symbolic power and symbolic struggles regarding the different kinds of capitals and their value. It is through these symbolic struggles whereby the values of capital assets are continuously assessed in their relative field which in turn changes the balance of the field (Alanen et al., 2015). Changes in economic, social or cultural capital alter one's symbolic capital which may then change their position and status within the field and whether they are included or excluded from a group. For example, within sport a player who is injured may see a reduction in their symbolic capital due to changes in their cultural and social capital, which may alter their position and status in their team or club. Symbolic violence is a term used to describe the differential of power between social groups. It is "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 167). This non-physical violence, although symbolic, is still capable of harming individuals, not in a physical sense but by exercising power over them. Returning to the example of the injured player, a reduction in power and status within their team may cause emotional harm.

3.5 The concept of habitus

The concept of habitus explains how our likelihood to act in a certain way is dependent on how we expect others to respond. It is how the social world becomes objectified into a range of probabilities and expectations. Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) expressed habitus as a “system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures”. In simple terms the habitus, which develops over time as a result of previous experiences, dictates how an individual thinks and acts in different situations. Engström (2008) acknowledged the deeper meaning of habitus suggesting it is more than simply a combination of knowledge, skills and values (i.e. socialisation) and described it as:

a system of structured and structuring dispositions that facilitate people’s orientation in their social and natural environments, render it comprehensible, and make it possible to think and act in totally new situations.

(Engström, 2008, p. 323)

The structure of an individual’s habitus is shaped by their previous environments, such as family upbringing and school experiences, as well as structuring through shaping a person’s current and future practices (Maton, 2014). Practices are therefore a result of both an individual’s habitus as well as their current circumstances and bring together objective social structure and subjective personal experiences (Maton, 2014). The habitus is the way we enter the field with the knowledge we have about ourselves; it is what make us more likely to choose certain actions rather than others. In effect the habitus organises us and participation in sport is reflective of an individual’s ingrained habitus. However, this does not simply refer to the habit of being physically active, but to how an individual thinks, rationalises and strategises over a particular situation. It is "a socialized subjectivity" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 126). Habitus is not a conscious selection, yet, nor is it unconsciously determined; instead it is developed by both an element of choice and structure over time. Despite decades of research Yang (2014) claimed that habitus is often misused and contested within the literature due to its multiple meanings. In explaining his reasoning for developing habitus Bourdieu (2000, p. 19) clarified:

I developed the concept of ‘habitus’ to incorporate the objective structures of society and the subjective role of agents within it. Habitus is a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour that people acquire through acting in society. It

reflects the differing positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle-class environment or in a working-class suburb. It is part of how society reproduces itself.

A closer look at the literature on habitus, reveals a wider discussion around the nature of the habitus and whether it is subjective to change. Some critics view Bourdieu's notion of the habitus as overly determinist (Laberge, 1995) and the suggestion that an individual's habitus, although stable and enduring, is not impossible to alter, has been widely debated (Engström, 2008). Informing this discussion, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 133) contested that habitus is "durable but not eternal!" and that, as an individual encounters new experiences, the structure of the habitus is either reinforced or modified. Similarly, Brown (2005, p. 18), suggested that "[s]lowly, individuals can and do recondition their habitus to approximate their renewed insights into their engagement with the social world". For instance, in early childhood, an individual develops a 'primary' habitus and, as they progress through life and encounter a range of different agents, move between a variety of social fields, and develop specific practices within the different fields, a 'secondary' habitus develops (Alanen et al., 2015). Yet, as Yang (2014) argued, the early formed primary habitus carries weight and is heavily ingrained, meaning any secondary habitus must be extremely durable and powerful to overcome an individual's primary habitus. Further exploration is required as to whether those individuals who have an ingrained habitus inclined towards physical inactivity can change this during adulthood, or whether it is ingrained so deeply that it continues to shape their preferences.

Individuals will develop a habitus within each social field and an individual's habitus within sport will dictate their taste for engaging in sporting activities as part of a wider social context and fields. Research by Engström (2008) reported that an individual's habitus towards sports participation is shaped by their experiences of participating in sports activities both at school and during leisure time and whether they perceive themselves as 'good' or 'bad' at sport. In addition, an individual's habitus is structured through experiencing a variety of different sports during childhood and adolescence which has a positive impact on sport and physical activity participation as an adult (Engström, 2008). The behaviours people engage in, in a variety of fields, illustrate the habituses that have

developed (Alanen et al., 2015). Bourdieu acknowledged the significance of this shared history in affecting the experiences, dispositions and behaviours of individuals, so the background and conditions of an individual's upbringing alongside their current circumstance shapes practice (Bourdieu, 1977). It is also important to consider the attachment individuals place on their sports practices, since these practices shape individuals' identities and their belonging to a social group (Clément, 1995). The concept of *illusio* links the habitus of an individual to that of the field. It is "the fact of being caught up in and by the game, of believing the game is 'worth the candle,' or, more simply, that playing is worth the effort" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 76). If an individual possesses the habitus of a particular sport then that activity will hold importance and interest for them, such interest and importance will have been ingrained in mind and body, they have a 'feel for the game'. This does not occur within one's conscious control (Williams, 1995). Those with *illusio* are invested in the stakes of the game whereas those without are often indifferent. Bourdieu (1998) suggested that every social field typically requires those who enter the field to possess such *illusio* in relation to the field.

Through empirical investigation a habitus is not seen but instead the power of a habitus can be observed in the behaviours and beliefs of the individuals involved (Maton, 2014). It is a relational structure comprising strong links to the field to generate practices. Where an individual's habitus aligns to the logic of the field and they are attuned to the *doxa*, Maton (2014) likens them to 'a fish in water'. They are wholly comfortable in that field. In contrast, situations arise whereby the habitus and field structures are disrupted. Bourdieu termed this hysteresis (Hardy, 2014). For example, in sport, if the field structures change, such as a new coach or an influx of new players to a team, the field may develop new structures and require an adjustment of habitus of those existing agents within the field.

Hysteresis, as a thinking tool provides explicit links between the objective nature of systemic change (field transformation) and the subjective character of an individual response to that change (altered habitus). In this way, it allows us to appreciate the nature and consequences of field changes as experienced personally and at a social environmental level.

(Hardy, 2014, p. 148)

Extending the discussion of habitus further, Bourdieu introduced the term *hexis* to refer to the embodied nature of the habitus. *Hexis* signifies “deportment, the manner and style in which actors ‘carry themselves’: stance, gait, gesture, etc” (Jenkins, 2014, p. 75). When exploring habitus towards sport, Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and *hexis* can be used to explore how embodied practices help to build identity, difference and social order within the field (Thorpe, 2009), especially in relation to gender and femininity.

3.6 The consideration of gender

The earlier work of Bourdieu fails to address issues of gender and McSharry (2017, p. 342) remarked that “his attention to gender is remarkable by virtue of its absence”. In his 2001 work ‘Masculine Domination’, Bourdieu addressed this absence by using habitus to explain how the emergence of gendered characteristics, such as those associated with certain sports, occur through social practices rather than any such characteristics being biologically determined (McSharry, 2017). In a critique of Bourdieu’s work, McSharry (2017) argued that the female-gendered habitus is submissive to the symbolic violence it endures rendering it largely inactive, lacking an explanation of how women develop agency to gain new positions within a field.

Bourdieu does not appear to consider gender as a fundamental structuring principle such as symbolic, cultural and economic capital (Thorpe, 2009), however, his work is a useful tool to further understand the role of gender in society (McCall, 1992). More specifically, “the impact of gender in the relationship to sport and in the acquisition of a practice can also be considered by the point of view of the field and habitus theory” (Clément, 1995, p. 153). For example, throughout childhood the autonomous but connected fields of PE, sport, and education, serve to create a gendered habitus that forms an individual’s physical capital. As a factor in the construction of a sporting social identity and internal dispositions for physical activity, such physical capital may predispose the individual to both seek out and gain access to fields of physical activity and sport in the future (Brown, 2005). Netball is commonly played amongst girls within secondary schools in England as part of the National Curriculum, and so those that consider themselves successful at school netball may seek to participate beyond PE.

Gendered dispositions have the same properties as the other states of cultural capital and can also operate as sources of power. An individual may employ their bodily hexis as a form of capital to strive for a position they wish to acquire in a social space (Laberge, 1995). For example, the ideal 'feminine' physique may be a form of capital within a netball club setting, presenting the ideal athletic and feminine image associated with the sport. Although, as Thorpe (2009) noted, traditional feminine ideals remain valued in some fields, views of the forms of femininity that are considered culturally valued continue to change and develop both within and across fields. Some argued that the associations between physical appearance and gender are linked to social class (Åberg et al., 2020). Bourdieu (1984) proposed that middle- and upper-class women were arguably far more conscious of their bodily appearance than working class women and men with the body acting as a symbol of refined taste, and of physical and cultural capital. For example, in contemporary society, the aesthetic ideal of the female body is "first of all middle-class, white and young, with fine facial features and unwrinkled skin, fit and well-toned and especially slim" (Ponterotto, 2016, p. 135).

Parallels can also be drawn between the epistemological approach of Bourdieu's work and feminist research as they both recognise the importance of epistemic reflexivity. Bourdieu suggested three types of biases that can influence sociological perception; the social origins of the researcher, the position of the researcher within the academic field, and the intellectualist bias (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Social reflexivity does not apply solely to the researcher but to the wider discipline and requires the researcher to systematically consider the scientific unconscious ingrained within theories, problems and scholarly judgement (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The researcher must seek to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their position in the world to understand the social reality of those being studied. Consideration should be given to not only the object of the study but the relation of the researcher to the object. This involves more than simply a consideration of class background, gender, or race and requires the researcher to objectivise their position within the academic field (Wacquant, 1989). This will be explored further within this thesis in Chapter 4.

3.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has drawn upon literature to explain the rationale for applying Bourdieu's theory of practice to the study of participation of women in recreational club sport (see Figure 3.1).

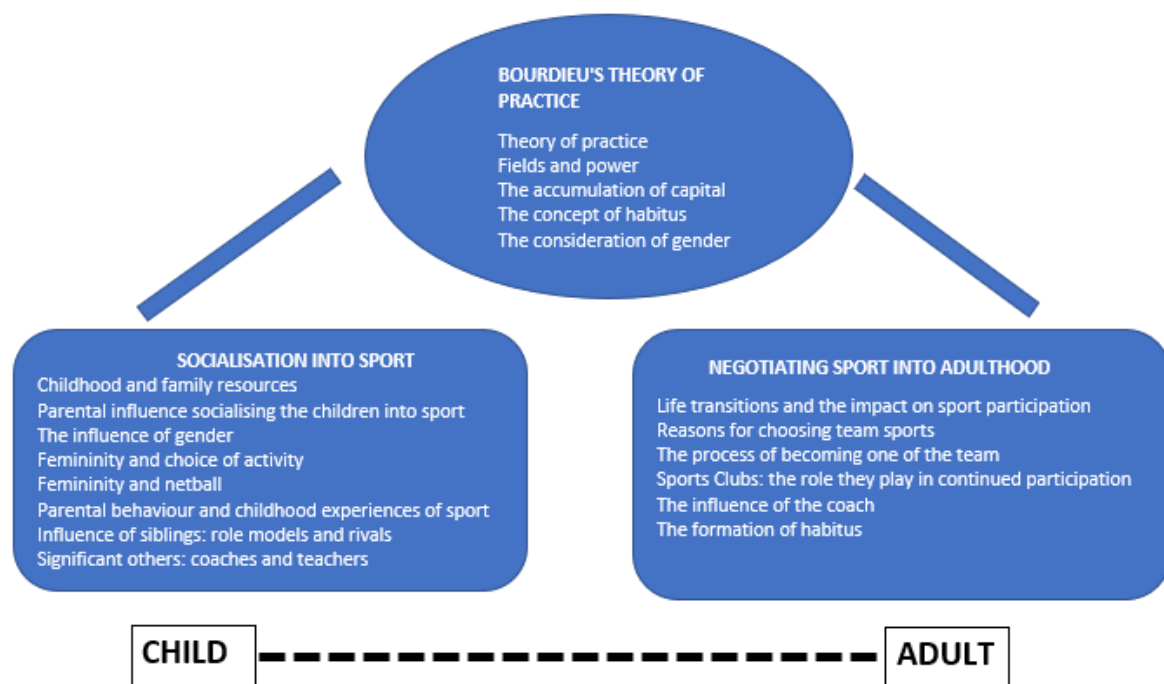


FIGURE 3.1 THE RELEVANCE OF BOURDIEU'S THEORY TO SOCIALISATION, GENDER AND LIFELONG SPORT PARTICIPATION

Firstly, Bourdieu's theory allows consideration of the value of external influences and experiences which can be applied throughout an individual's lifespan to determine how they interact to shape their world. It is the lifespan perspective that provides value to the investigation of sports participation; namely the exploration of how an individual's capital and habitus from childhood shape their practice within the field of sport in adulthood and whether these are stable and durable, or whether they have evolved and changed over time. The concept of *illusio* is particularly relevant to this study as it connects the habitus to the field, joining the past and present to determine practice. Secondly, with sport viewed as a traditionally masculine domain the consideration of hierarchies of power discussed by Bourdieu are applicable at a societal level, in terms of the consideration of gender and

female participation, as well as discussion of more localised hierarchies of power within team dynamics. Thirdly, the concept of habitus and capital allows the connection between the fields of PE, sport, and education, with a focus on how these interact to form a gendered habitus. Finally, using Bourdieu as a theoretical lens will bring together existing studies applying Bourdieu's theory to socialisation, gender and lifelong sport participation, whilst paying particular attention to the methodological considerations of Bourdieu in relation to the researcher and the role that their habitus and capital play in the field.

Chapter 4: From neophyte to knowing: a methodological journey

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological philosophy that has shaped this inquiry and is formed of two parts. The first part discusses my ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs and how this informed the approach to this study, with an explanation of how these are positioned within the qualitative research paradigm. Within this section ethnography as a methodological approach is also discussed alongside its applicability to this study, before focusing on the methods employed to collect data. Part two examines issues central to conducting qualitative research incorporating my own experiences within the field and discussing matters such as access, data protection, trustworthiness and rigour, reflexivity and friendship. The final section provides an explanation of the choice of data analysis method along with a detailed account of my data interpretation, to provide transparency and clarity of each stage of the process. The style of this chapter differs from Chapters 2 and 3, as it purposely allows for my own subjective experiences to be considered, with the inclusion of excerpts from my reflective diary to illustrate my journey as a researcher throughout the study.

Part One: Research Methodology

Once the overall research aim, and initial broad areas of investigation, had been established, I encountered the challenge of selecting the most suitable methodological approach and appropriate methods to address and explore the research aim fully. This chapter discusses these deliberations starting with the methodological stance of myself, the researcher, and the position of this study within the wider research context, before entering a discussion on the chosen methodological approach. This is followed by an introduction to the club, and the participants involved, with the final section explaining the specific methods used.

4.2 Research paradigms and methodological rationale

All researchers have a belief system that shapes their ontological (the nature of reality), epistemological (the theory of knowledge) and methodological preferences and it is these beliefs that characterise the research paradigm adopted by a researcher (Willig, 2013) and shape the practice of research (Smith and Caddick, 2012). There are three common

philosophical research paradigms used to inform research methods and analysis: positivism, critical theory and interpretivism (Ryan, 2018). Positivism is typically associated with experiments and quantitative research (Ryan, 2018), of which the goal is to produce objective knowledge, with the position that there is only one correct view of the world (Willig, 2013). Positivists aim to produce factual reports reflecting the nature of the phenomena being studied and to produce findings independent of any values of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Reality is viewed as objective, where there is one version of what is real. Positivism falls outside of my beliefs as a researcher in the context of this study, as it fails to consider the subjective experiences of the participants, their interactions and interpretations, and in what way this may shape their thoughts and behaviour, an integral aspect to this inquiry.

Critical theory, holds similarities to positivism, also underpinned by a realist ontology, though it does possess some similarities to interpretivism by supporting modified subjective views of truth (Ryan, 2018). Critical theorists hold the opinion that to fully understand society the complexities and contradictions of modern life should be appreciated, including how power and privilege underpin social relationships and belief systems (Kane and Maxwell, 2011). Therefore, a critical realist does not assume the data collected can immediately reveal what is going on in the world but in order to further understanding the data must be interpreted (Willig, 2013). The aim of critical theorists is not simply to describe and further understand the phenomena being studied, but to attempt to change the situation. This study will seek to apply a critical approach in line with historical and social views on women in sport, and in society in general, although the aim is not to change the women's immediate situation, but instead, to further understand the meaning and experiences of the women in this specific context.

Interpretivism is the view that truth and knowledge are subjective, shaped by cultural and historical influences, grounded within the subjective experiences of individuals and their perception and interpretation of such experiences (Ryan, 2018). Social phenomena are viewed as actively constructed by individuals (Bloor and Wood, 2006) and that reality is subjective and takes into account multiple views of what may be real (Ryan, 2018). One such approach to interpretivist research is phenomenology. Interpretive phenomenological

research, according to Willig (2013, p. 17) aims to “generate knowledge about the quality and texture of experience as well as about its meaning within a particular social and cultural context”.

This interpretivist standpoint relies upon the "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), as well as acknowledging the impact of the researcher's own background and experiences on the research. Interpretivism, therefore, aligns with the aims of this inquiry and my own preferred philosophical stance as a researcher. There is typically a strong connection between the interpretivist paradigm (the methodological approach) and qualitative methodology (the means of collecting data or the methods used to collect data) (Thanh and Thanh, 2015). Qualitative researchers are those who study “a world comprised of meanings, interpretations, feelings, talk, and interaction” (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997, p. 13), which aligns with the exploratory nature of this research.

To meet the need for more accounts of current, real life experiences and understanding the details surrounding the choices individuals make that are associated with those experiences, this study mirrors the trend within the sociology of sport literature to move away from wide-scale positivist surveys that produce lists of sport participation habits for particular people at particular points in time. Instead of providing abstract data on how often women do or do not play sport, this interpretive approach seeks to provide an in-depth and subjective account of the way in which a small group of women negotiate their sports participation around a number of variables, the impact this has on their lives and also what social and cultural factors may have contributed to the way the women manage their participation. This relates to Bourdieu's theory of practice (1984), which acknowledges the importance and interaction of social influences and experiences to shape an individual's world, and mediates between objectivity and subjectivity by considering both the objective structures of society and the subjective role of agents within it. The collective stories and narratives of these British women provides a relativist view on everyday women and their sport involvement in a city in England. This interpretive approach acknowledges that “individuals have freedom to act in particular ways, and that they experience things differently” (Jones, 2014, p. 32).

4.2.1 Developing the research questions

The aim of this research was to extend and deepen the understanding of what it means to be a female playing a team sport within a club in 21st Century Britain, as well as reflecting upon the women's own socialisation and understanding of gender roles, which will be embedded in their own social cultural development. In line with my ontological and epistemological views as a researcher and, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), the more specific research questions evolved throughout the data collection, data analysis and the coding process. During the data collection, maintaining a reflective diary prompted regular reflection on, not only the participant's behaviour and experiences, but also my own perception and interpretation of these events. These shaped the nature of inquiry throughout the research and acted as a useful guide to record and highlight areas for further exploration during data collection. This will be discussed in Section 4.7. First the tradition of ethnography is considered.

4.3 The tradition of ethnography

Traditionally ethnography was used to provide descriptive accounts of largely unknown societies and cultures, usually located outside of the West, involving extended in-depth field study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). One of the first recognised ethnographers was Bronislaw Malinowski, whose fieldwork arose when being confined to spend time on the Trobriand Islands during World War I (Sands, 2002). Years after his death Malinowski's Diary was published, which exposed his personal feelings, emotions and views on those he researched and his experiences of research. This brought into question the impartiality and objectivity of a researcher in the field and gave rise to a more contemporary style of ethnography, where the researcher becomes part of the ethnography (Sands, 2002). This discussion of the researcher as part of the research process and their influence on the ethnography is known as 'reflexivity' (see Section 4.10), and forms an important part of all social research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Leading contemporary ethnographers have started to focus on creating ways of understanding and making sense of outsiders within the field, including themselves as researchers, as well as exploring 'in group' relations (Picken, 2009).

In the field of sport and exercise, ethnography has not always been the most popular approach (Smith and Caddick, 2012), and few fully immersive ethnographies that have involved living amongst the participants exist. Since the 1980s ethnographic researchers, rather than researching a holistic culture, select a specific topic to focus on (Sands, 2002). The use of ethnographies based upon a particular setting in sport and exercise research has grown extensively in the last decade (Molnar and Purdy, 2015) and, where ethnographic studies have been carried out, they have contributed to the understanding of a variety of sporting cultures and sub-cultures (Thorpe, 2009). For example, ethnographic studies have been conducted in elite male rowing (Purdy and Jones, 2013), male boxing (Woodward, 2008), youth sports participation (MacPhail et al., 2003) and surfing (Sands, 2002) to name a few. The purpose of ethnography within this study, aligns closely with the work of Smith and Caddick (2012), as it examines the intricate nature of the social world and the women's interpretations of this world.

4.4 Why choose ethnography for this research?

Many studies relating to sports participation typically employ quantitative methodology comprising large scale questionnaires and survey data (e.g. West et al., 2002; Downward and Rasciute, 2015; Brown and Bowmer, 2018). A sufficiently detailed understanding of female participation is limited as there are few existing qualitative and in-depth studies of female sport participation within the UK, with even fewer studies relating the social and cultural childhood experiences of participation in sport and how this may shape an individual's continued participation into adulthood. The goal of this research is to understand the women's motives and reasons for participation, alongside a range of subjective experiences that influence their participation behaviour. To achieve depth of understanding, an ethnographic approach was preferred with myself, the researcher, as participant. The research is designed to be emergent and cooperative, whereby the researcher and participants are interdependent. As a researcher, my view falls in line with that described by Smith and Caddick (2012, p. 64) where the researcher "considers social reality as humanly constructed, multiple and subjective" and where I, the researcher, do not exist independently of the research.

This open-ended inductive research methodology served to develop knowledge and understanding and explore meanings. The ability of ethnography to provide rich in-depth accounts of experiences and to discover participants' meanings, attitudes and behaviours is essential in a study that is investigating participation and the culture of female club sport. For example, MacPhail et al. (2003, p. 254) conducted a single-site ethnographic study of sport socialisation in an athletics club and found this approach to be "ideally suited to investigating dynamic and complex activities such as youth sport participation". Furthermore, as O'Reilly (2012, p. 14) pointed out, "what people say they do is not always the same as what they do. What they do varies with circumstances and setting", making it an essential part of this study that I not only hear the women's narratives regarding their participation but live it alongside them. This is justified by Krane and Baird (2005, p. 87) who explained that:

ethnography is aimed toward understanding the culture of a particular group from the perspective of the group members. The group culture, then, will lend insight into the behaviours, values, emotions, and mental states of group members.

Using narratives from the women provides the most appropriate and authentic means to convey their stories, and the emotions and feelings that accompanied their sport participation throughout their lives. The term, narrative, can be defined in different ways by different people, and this study follows the definition of Smith and Sparkes (2009, p. 2):

a narrative is taken to mean a complex genre that routinely contains a point and characters along with a plot connecting events that unfold sequentially over time and in space to provide an overarching explanation or consequence. It is a constructed form or template which people rely on to tell stories.

Narratives also help to shape an individual's identity, and, within this study, the women hold multiple identities such as daughter, sister, netballer, friend, mother, captain etc, within a number of overlapping fields. As Smith and Sparkes (2009) suggested, identities are influenced by past experiences, entrenched within current personal and cultural histories and the construction of narratives in relation to others. The social positioning in which the participants place themselves within their narrative, and the meanings that they attach to their stories, will also help to understand their identity in a variety of situations (Harré et al.,

2009). Bourdieu suggested that individuals or actors do not always know why they engage in certain behaviours and that there is often more meaning behind their actions than they can articulate. Bourdieu's concept of habitus, therefore, accounts for the logic, stability and unconscious nature of practice, as well navigating both structure and agency (Williams, 1995).

4.5 Ethnographic design

I favoured an ethnographic approach within one club, similar to that undertaken by MacPhail et al. (2003), to allow for greater depth of inquiry as opposed to breadth. The ethnographic design spanned over two seasons and was selected so that the women were studied over time, and within the context of playing competitive sport. As suggested by Jones (2014) this allows the researcher to further understand the behaviour and culture of the group. In this instance, due to the nature of sport, I could only gain access to the women at certain times, and so the ethnography was constrained to a specific place and time, comprising the various netball settings where training and matches occurred, and the setting where each interview took place. Though not a 'true' ethnography, like the works of Malinowski and Middleton (which are even very different to one another), this study replicates the techniques of ethnography, bound within specific social and cultural parameters. Conducting fieldwork in this way, using an ethnographic perspective, is akin to what Brewer (2000, p. 18) termed 'little' ethnography which:

...involves judgements about: the object of the research, which is to study people in naturally occurring settings; the researcher's role in that setting, which is to understand and explain what people are doing in that setting by means of participating directly in it; and the data to be collected, which must be naturally occurring and captured in such a way that meaning is not imposed on them from the outside.

My physical presence at the club and in the players' lives was constrained to training, matches and club events, but I was also added to the club and second team Facebook messenger group, which formed the main communication between players. Though I participated in these chats, I did not use any of the messages for data collection purposes.

4.6 Selection of Uptown Netball Club

In selecting the context for this ethnographic study, I followed the principles outlined by Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 199) that, “your age, gender, and even sporting experience or ability may all have a potential impact on your choice of ethnography”. This concept is described as the researcher being ‘self among self’ whereby Sands (2002, p. 25) advises, “participant observation may involve doing fieldwork with a group of athletes in a sport in which the ethnographer participated”. Once my age, gender, and sporting ability were considered, it became evident that netball would be the most suitable sport to provide the context for this study. Despite netball being the fastest growing female team sport in England (Sport England, 2019), with many women’s experiences of competitive sport occurring in a netball club, there has been little research investigating women’s participation in a recreational netball club setting in the UK. I considered an ethnographic style study, based within the club setting, to be a unique and efficient means of researching, and progressing research investigating the social and cultural factors that shape female sports participation.

Several netball clubs were considered, and Uptown Netball Club was selected to be studied due to its historical and local prominence, as well as my existing contacts at the club that gave ease of access. The background and context of the club is described in detail in Chapter 5, along with an introduction of the nine players who became the core subjects (see Appendix A). However, it is important to note that, similar to many recreational netball clubs in the UK, as discussed in Chapter 2, Uptown is not a club that has its own facilities, club house, or ground but is more of a virtual club that relies on hiring school facilities for training and playing matches. Due to the dynamic nature of sport the sample of participants naturally evolved over the duration of the research and, although relatively small with just nine participants, it exceeds the minimum sample size of six suggested by Clarke et al. (2016b) for research using thematic analysis (the chosen method of data analysis).

4.7 Method selection

Ethnographic research often involves a combination of several different methods as part of its design including semi-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observation and field notes. As discussed, this study related more to ‘Little’ ethnography, which Brewer

(2000, p. 18) described as using “several methods that assess social meanings, observe activities and involve close association with, or participation in, a setting or ‘field’”. This multiple method design forms part of the aims of ethnography to create as rich and in-depth account of the social world as possible (Picken, 2009). This study used participant observation, field notes and semi-structured interviews. The data collection followed an inductive process, allowing a flexibility and openness to new knowledge. Throughout the data collection process, new topics and new avenues for exploration were identified and, as a result, further research questions were refined and shaped as the study progressed. I entered into this research with subjective constructions of my own experiences and ideas regarding family influences in sport and, therefore, it is acknowledged that the observations and field notes will to some extent be shaped by these experiences.

4.7.1 Participant observation

Participant observation, and the immersion into the life of participants, has been described as a means to “getting inside the skin of one’s subjects” (Lyng, 1998, p. 225). Participant observations were carried out during scheduled training sessions, competitive matches and club events, with observation data only collected on those who consented to be involved in the research. During the initial training sessions, I was an ‘observer as participant’ although I was known to be a researcher by those being studied. Initially, at competitive matches I intended to be a spectator, but, in line with recommendations by Toms and Kirk (2006), I became increasingly aware that crucial to the research was a need to create a social position that all of the participants could relate to. At first I struggled to find my position within the club setting, indeed, the role played by the observer is an important consideration (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). According to Adler and Adler (1987), there are three membership roles: peripheral member; active member; and complete member. The peripheral member is the most marginal role, and least committed to the context, as researchers do not interact in the role or activities of central members. As an active member, the researcher moves away from the marginal role and adopts a more central place in the setting that involves a functional role in addition to an observational role. The role of complete member is where the researcher is fully immersed in the research setting and studies the subject matter from the perspective of a full member.

Although becoming a complete member of the group is not always necessary or even possible (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), it became apparent that the friendship and rapport required for this nature of data collection could only be created by being a complete member, and fulfilling the same role as the rest of the team. As a netballer, a wife, a mother and a full-time worker, immersing myself into the culture of the club as a player allowed for me, as the researcher, to develop empathy with participants through the sharing of their lived experiences. I was operating in a variety of overlapping fields, similar to the participants, and my commitment to attending training and playing matches displayed my genuine interest in netball, which appeared to be viewed favourably by the other players. Indeed, Adler and Adler (1987) suggested that the complete membership role improves the legitimacy of the researcher, and is the best route to learning about the emotions, feelings and behaviours of the players (Adler and Adler, 1987). The role of complete membership, however, is not without its criticisms and, as Woodward (2008, p. 551) noted, physically practicing a sport is one of ethnography's main assets, yet, she also warned that "participation is not everything, nor does it necessarily access a more authentic 'truth' than observation and interviewing."

In this context, I felt practicing the sport alongside the players was my only option to get close enough to obtain the depth of data required. Participant observations allowed me to see first-hand the way in which each participant negotiated their netball participation. It is a way of "'knowing people' rather than 'knowing about them'" (Smith and Caddick, 2012, p. 66). Participant observations included observing logistical and factual information, such as who attended training each week, punctuality, whether they stayed for the whole session, and whether family members played a part in this process (i.e. transport, support etc.). As I became more confident and competent in my skills as a researcher I began to consider the less tangible aspects, such as observing the relationships between players, the cliques and friendships within the groups, and my interpretations of emotions and feelings the players exhibited in different situations. Participant observations did not observe family members per se, but simply noted their presence (or lack of), which informed the questions asked in the interviews. Observations were also useful in verifying what participants said in interviews, operating a form of data triangulation. For example, one participant described how netball impacted her decision to go out on a Saturday night and how she does not drink

a lot before a game, yet, at the pre-season tournament this player arrived openly admitting feeling the effects of alcohol after a night out. Therefore, participant observation allowed for a certain amount of corroboration between the various data collection methods (this is discussed further in Section 4.9).

4.7.2 Interviews

My role as complete member playing for the second team during the 2016-17 season proved invaluable in gaining a sense of who the participants were, their personalities, and their attitudes to netball, which informed many of the questions asked in conversation and interviews. This view was also replicated by Sands (2002, p. 69) who maintained that “formal interviews are often culled from the fruits of observation and the information retrieved during the field interviews”. All nine interviews took place during the 2016-17 season, as I began to sense that the players felt more comfortable and relaxed around me and a mutual trust developed, such as that noted by Purdy and Jones (2013). Friendship as method held greater potential to enhance my data collection, although, as Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) pointed out, one cannot assume a direct correlation between depth of friendship and depth of data (see Section 4.11).

In other instances, it was the interviews that helped to develop relationships with participants, due to the intimacy in visiting each other's' homes. For example, throughout the research my relationship with one participant, Rebecca (see Section 4.8.1 for further details of participants), had felt quite strained and she had become a little frustrated during one training session. During her interview she explained why, which changed my opinion of her actions that I had previously taken personally:

I just want to get better. I think even from starting Uptown to now I've got better. And as long as I can just keep getting better and just do things. And it sounds pathetic, but I really like it when Caroline says, 'well done'. And that's why when I get frustrated, I really think things through and I watch other people and they're doing different things and I get really critical of myself because I can't quite work out what I need to do and then that's when I get a bit frustrated.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

The interview conversations were based around encouraging the women to tell their story of netball participation throughout their lives. As well as focusing on the women's current participation the interviews provided rich data on the participants' socialisation into sport, the involvement of their family throughout childhood and adolescence, and their transition into adult sport. A draft interview guide can be found in Appendix B, which indicates the nature of the questions that were asked; however, they were not rigid, and each conversation was led by the participant as much as possible. To help stimulate discussion around lifelong involvement participants were invited to draw a timeline of their netball participation throughout their lives (see Appendix C). Using such graphic elicitation as interview stimuli are considered to be effective instruments in conveying thoughts to others (Crilly et al., 2006). Although, the use of such tools has traditionally been put in place when verbal exchanges are difficult, in this instance the timeline acted as a prompt to encourage the participant to recall their netball experiences throughout their lives. Such reflection often highlighted high or low points of their netball participation, including any gaps in their playing career, for example, through injury or pregnancy. Participants were encouraged to articulate their timeline through narratives to bring their timeline to life. One such danger of referring to the timeline in the interview is that it can cause confusion upon transcription, where terms such as 'this' or 'here' are used, which can lose meaning later upon transcription and analysis. To ensure this was not the case, any reference to the timeline was, as suggested by Crilly et al. (2006), made clear by myself during the interview to clarify the interviewees' responses.

My own ability as a qualitative researcher was also a key factor in the effectiveness of data collection. One of the most important aspects of the interview, proposed by Ezzy (2010), is the self-awareness of the interviewer to be able to listen openly and attentively to the narratives of the participants. This is supported by Legard et al. (2003) who described the key features of an in-depth interview to include the combination of structure and flexibility, an interactive nature, and the researcher using a range of probes and techniques to fully explore and extract all the reasons that underpin the participants' answers, such as reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs. This is a skill that I feel I developed throughout the research process supported by my reflective diary to consider such thoughts, emotions and reactions following the interviews.

4.7.3 Field notes

In ethnography, the use of field notes is the most common means for recording observational and interview data, although the way in which they are recorded is often individual to the researcher and research project, depending upon the context, setting and role of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In this project field notes were typically used to record incidents, events, and quotes from participants alongside my own reflections. As a participant observer it was often not feasible to stop participating in the activity to make notes, and so any observations were recorded mentally and then, at the earliest opportunity, saved using the notes facility on my mobile phone. This notetaking was typically completed in short breaks between practice at training, at quarter times during matches and whilst sat in my car immediately following a match or training session. Adopting a more visible note taking strategy would perhaps have been detrimental in my pursuit of becoming a complete member of the team, and so relying on my phone to do this discreetly appeared the most favourable option. In terms of building rapport and relationships with participants it was preferable to be as inconspicuous as possible, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) warned, visual notetaking may cause certain individuals to feel unsettled or anxious when they were unaware of what was being documented. Using my phone in such a way was culturally acceptable in this setting, as many of the players checked messages and calls at the same time, therefore, paid little attention to the act of notetaking.

The inductive nature of the inquiry, as well as developing my own skills as a researcher, led to a shift in my selection of noteworthy observations during the duration spent in the field. Initially, my field notes were extremely logistical, such as who attended training, who did not and why they did not, team selection, and any insights into family support. As my access to players deepened, and my research skills developed, I began to observe and note more behaviours, and my interpretation of such events. In particular, my increased level of engagement with the second team, during the 2016-17 season, permitted a closer view of the team and the interactions between players, resulting in access to more detailed and in-depth data than in the first season. This is reflected in the type, level and detail of notes recorded between the first and second season.

Ensuring the processing of notes is maintained in a timely way is crucial, as memories fade (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and events may be recorded differently following a period of reflection, overwriting any valuable first impressions (Willig, 2013). To combat these potential dangers, I developed a strict routine throughout the fieldwork. This involved typing up my field notes every Tuesday morning from training the night before and adding these to my reflective diary, which combined these observations with my own reflections. Although the reflective diary itself is not considered as field notes, as noted by Sands (2002), it proved a valuable tool for supplementing the field notes and adding structure and timing to the events, as well as any conflict felt by the researcher during fieldwork. Similarly, following matches and interviews, I ensured field notes were written up either the same or next day and framed within my reflective diary. The reflective element of this process ensured a level of familiarity with the data, as well as the opportunity to consider new themes and topics that were generated from the data, which could then be discussed or explored further with participants during the study.

Part 2: Data Collection and Analysis

In this second part of the chapter I first of all provide clarity on ethical procedures, gaining research access and issues around data protection, before moving on to discuss some of the complexities around ethnographic-style research, including trustworthiness and rigour, reflexivity and the issue of friendship, and consider these concepts in the context of this study. The final section of this chapter discusses the process used to analyse the data gathered, and considers my role, as the researcher, in this process.

4.8 Ethics

Throughout the study, attention was given to ethical considerations. Professional integrity was maintained throughout, adhering to the British Sociological Association code of ethics through safeguarding the participants and by reporting the findings accurately and truthfully. Ethical approval was gained from The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee on 12th February 2016 (Appendix D) which is when the data collection began. As aforementioned, due to the transient nature of players and teams the focus of the investigation became the 2016-17 season.

4.8.1 Research access and consent

Gaining access to participants, and subsequently developing trust and rapport with them, forms one of the key components of successful fieldwork (Purdy and Jones, 2013). As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 50) advised:

knowing who has the power to open up or block off access, or who consider themselves and are considered by others to have the authority to grant or refuse access, is, of course, an important aspect of sociological knowledge about the setting.

Contact was initially made with the first team captain, Emma, who was responsive and enthusiastic, and throughout the study became the constant authority figure at the club, and my sole gatekeeper. Initially, Emma introduced me to the first team coach, Tara, and I was able to gain access to training sessions, matches, and make contact in person with all players at the club once ethical approval had been gained. I then attended a club training session and briefed the players on the purpose and nature of the research, as well as providing participants with a written invitation letter outlining the process and a consent form to take away and return at a later date (see Appendix E). Players were invited to think about their involvement for one week and return the completed consent forms at training the following week, where all forms were collected by myself. Club members were not pressured to participate, and it was made clear that if they decided not to take part there would be no disadvantage to them of any kind. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any point throughout the data collection process (Feb 2016-May 2017), and upon doing so their interview data would be destroyed, although the observation and field notes would remain part of the study. Participants were informed that they were unable to withdraw from the study following the end of the data collection period in May 2017.

An environment such as a netball club is processual, where players come and go, particularly between seasons. Although I began data collection in Feb 2016, it was not an instantaneous windfall of data, instead it took time to get to know the club and the players and to hone my skills as a researcher. This initiation process was crucial to the success of the

study and, in particular, my reflective diary during this transition period proved central to my own development. Over the summer the teams experienced changes of players, and to maintain a consistent sample, the data collection for the thesis focuses primarily on the experiences of nine players during the 2016-17 season. To counter for this movement of players, the research ethics also needed to be processual, ensuring that those participants who joined at a later date were fully aware of my research. Typically, I was able to talk to each newcomer at training, and the same consent procedure was replicated on a one-to-one basis. There was also a change in coach, with a new coach, Caroline, appointed at the start of the 2016-17 season. Emma was instrumental in ensuring that Caroline was happy with the continuation of my research and the role I had taken up at the club.

Due to the inductive nature of the research it was not possible to tell the participants everything about the research as, at the early stage of consent I did not know myself exactly what form the research would take. Therefore, following data collection, an extension of the consent letter (see Appendix F) was issued to all participants to further explain how the data collected would be used. Throughout the study there were also incidences where participants cancelled arranged interviews repeatedly, giving the impression that, although they were happy to be observed at training and matches, for one reason or another they did not want to participate in the interview. For these participants I had to use my own judgement and decide what level of encouragement to apply. My decision was not to actively engage in encouraging someone to be interviewed and, therefore, some players were part of my observations, but were not interviewed and were not core participants.

Research carried out in natural settings also poses issues of consent due to researchers often having limited control over the research process and their participants' interactions with others (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). For example, during match observations, situations arose due to the behaviour of the opposition, or the umpire, or where a guest coach lead training. In instances such as these, the focus of such field notes was based on the Uptown participant, rather than the third-party individual.

4.8.2 Gathering data

Once consent had been obtained from participants, the data was collected using participant observation and field notes at both scheduled training sessions and matches, club gatherings, and formal and informal interviews. Due to the nature of the research, it was important that players were observed both in the training and the competition environment to ensure that the data was naturally occurring in a contextual setting. The second team matches took place on a Sunday morning at a fixed venue, and the first team matches were played on a Saturday or Sunday morning either at the fixed home venue or away. The location of the interview was decided by the participants. This can empower participants and also provide equity within the interview process (Herzog, 2005). Three players opted to be interviewed in their own homes, one player selected a café in a garden centre so that her toddler could play in the play area while we chatted, and five visited my house for their interviews. The selection of the interview location informs the research process and, as Herzog (2005, p. 27) acknowledged, “the physical location in which the interview is conducted is one of the most concrete expressions of this process of boundary-crossing”. The setting of the interview and the social dynamics of the interview process also contributes to the power dynamics of the participant-researcher relationship (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Further details of the interview location with each player are discussed in Chapter 5.

Ethnographic research can impact the lives of those involved and have negative consequences such as stress and anxiety, particularly if the research is perceived to be evaluating an individual’s life (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Throughout the study I attempted to protect the participants from harm or unpleasant experiences. Relationships between myself and the participants naturally developed over time and were based on trust and integrity. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, and participants were informed of their rights with regard to the data. Written and electronic data was stored securely and responsibly. The written field notes and interview recordings were only reviewed by me, who transcribed, coded and analysed them all. All data was anonymised as much as possible by allocating each participant a pseudonym (checking that they were happy with this), and each participant was sent a copy of their interview transcript to check and authorise (e.g. member checking – which is discussed in Section 4.9). The original notes and recordings will

be kept for a maximum of 10 years before being destroyed. I, and my supervisors, have been the only people with access to raw data. The data will be held on the OU server, and in a hard copy, in a locked filing cabinet. No participants actively withdrew from the study at any point during the data collection period (February 2016-May 2017).

Initially, the sample was to include all members of the club, but, as the study progressed, it became clear that I was a member of the second team, and that my ethnography, participant observation, and field notes were typically constructed around the second team squad. Therefore, it naturally evolved that the focus of my research would centre on the second team players, alongside two first team players with whom I managed to build a rapport (see Appendix A for participant information and Chapter 5). Although a smaller study than intended, Kay (2004) acknowledged that small-scale qualitative studies are able to shed light on previously undocumented issues, both logistical as well as emotional and attitudinal, that have an impact on sports participation. Similarly, Braun et al. (2019) advocated that the accumulation of many small-scale studies that explore the same subject area can begin to provide greater breadth.

4.9 Trustworthiness and rigour

There has been a rapid growth in the publication of a range of different qualitative research within the general field of sport and exercise in recent years (Smith and McGannon, 2018). Despite this growth, qualitative research is often still subject to criticism over claims regarding lack of validity and reliability, which in turn questions the integrity of the findings. To address criticism that qualitative research lacks validity, Tracy (2010, p. 849) presented an eight-point model for quality to judge qualitative research which is flexible and where “researchers can and will fall short, deviate, and improvise”. The eight key markers identified by Tracy (2010) include ensuring the topic of research is ‘worthy’ for investigation, maintains ‘rich rigor’ and is ‘sincere’ and ‘credible’ with a ‘resonance’ that influences, affects or moves readers. The research should make a ‘significant contribution’ and ensure ‘ethical’ considerations are acknowledged and adhered to and that, overall, the study has a ‘meaningful coherence’ and achieves what it sets out to achieve, using appropriate methods and connecting with appropriate literature. The use of universal criteria in this way has been viewed as ‘problematic’ with questions raised as to whether such an approach fits with a

subjective epistemology (Smith and Caddick, 2012) and suggestions that it offers a narrow view of what may be considered good research (Smith and McGannon, 2018). Instead, Smith and Caddick (2012) proposed using 'a non-foundational approach' whereby researchers do not apply a set of criteria to all qualitative research, but instead consider which criteria can be altered and applied differently appropriate to the nature of the research that is being judged. In this section discussion is centred around the criteria of trustworthiness and rigour.

The trustworthiness of the research is judged upon whether the researcher took every action to ensure ethical and appropriate collection, analysis and reporting of data (Carlson, 2010). One such way of addressing this is to consider the notion of rigour which, although interpreted slightly differently by various scholars, and even contested by some, is typically used "as a marker of excellence sought through method" (Smith and McGannon, 2018, p. 3). Several procedures are used to establish trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry, including audit trails and thick and rich description (Carlson, 2010), which were both used within this study. Audit trails require researchers to maintain meticulous documentation of all aspects of the study, and thick and rich description allows for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, providing detailed descriptions of participants and settings to improve credibility, and to connect the reader emotionally to the participants (Carlson, 2010) (see Chapter 5). The purpose of qualitative research is not to generalise to entire populations, but instead to make connections, and it is this connection, where the research resonates with the reader and either provokes action or stimulates curiosity, which is termed 'naturalistic generalisability' (Smith and Caddick, 2012).

Trustworthiness and rigour has also been discussed alongside the process of member checking (Smith and McGannon, 2018). The use of member checking, is also referred to as participant or respondent validation, and is a technique to establish the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). The process involves the participants ensuring the data is trustworthy and credible, and is often achieved by returning the data such as interview transcripts, and results in the form of themes and interpretations, and inviting them to comment on the accuracy of the data (Smith and McGannon, 2018). Yet, some scholars feel that applying such techniques of rigour might restrict the qualitative researcher (Sandelowski, 1993), as

well as the view that such a procedure does not offer the verification sought (Smith and McGannon, 2018). In this study, participants were provided with copies of their interview transcripts at training and advised to read them in their own time, providing any responses by a certain date. Although this aligns with a more positivist approach, I also provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss the transcript in a shared discussion, supporting a more interpretive style, as identified by Birt et al. (2016). Member checking is also influenced by time as experiences and interpretations change (Smith and McGannon, 2018), therefore, participants were issued with their transcript within a short window following their interview. Due to the time lapse between collecting other forms of data such as participant observation and fieldnotes and generating codes and themes, member checking in this study was only used for the interview transcripts. Member checking was, in this instance, employed not as a tool to enhance rigour, but as an ethical procedure to involve the participants in the data and provide them with a sense of empowerment and ownership which, as Smith and McGannon (2018) suggested, adds to the relationship between researcher and participant. Studies often fail to report the way in which participants engage with member checking (Birt et al., 2016), and in this study participants were amused to see their transcripts typed up in this way, but no member requested any changes to be made or further discussion.

The trustworthiness of the interpretations and conclusions of the data can also be established through substantiating the different data sets (Carlson, 2010). This is known as triangulation and involves using multiple methods to enhance the understanding of a phenomenon (Birt et al., 2016), and viewing the phenomenon from different perspectives (Willig, 2013). The different methods do not provide multiple measurements of the same phenomenon, but rather add to the understanding of it (Willig, 2013). For example, within this study the women may provide detailed reasons, feelings and emotions in interviews about their netball, which may add value and explain certain behaviours at training or at matches:

...Hannah is struggling with her knee[...]I think back to my interview with her and how I'm a lot more empathetic about her injuries now, as I think before I wondered how real it was and that she didn't really like training. From interviewing her I now have a much better understanding of her condition and what she goes through to play.

Considering she had an amazing game and the work that she put in yesterday I'm not surprised that she is suffering today. I guess that's one of the downsides of having training on Monday after a game on a Sunday – it leaves little room for recovery.

Reflective diary, Season Two, 7th November 2016

Triangulation is particularly relevant to enrich research by providing an appreciation of different dimensions within various social contexts (Willig, 2013), and is particularly important in this study to consider the overlapping fields the women occupy.

4.10 Reflexivity

As discussed previously, studies must acknowledge and explain in what way the researcher's position and perspective has influenced the research (Willig, 2013). If the reader is to appreciate and interpret the interpretation of the researcher, they must be informed in great depth about the process used to generate it (Willig, 2013). This is known as reflexivity, and is considered a crucial component of ethnographic activity as it indicates the researcher's position in the social world which is being examined (Hodgson, 2000). The researcher has been described by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 39) as the chief research instrument or "human instrument" and, therefore, Hodgson (2000, p. 3) proposes that, "subjects' responses to the presence of the researcher, and the researcher's response to the context, are as valuable as any other aspect of the study". This stance resonates with the work of MacPhail (2004), who discussed the importance of reflexivity and the subjects' responses to the presence of the researcher. This is described by Blommaert and Jie (2010, p. 27) as the 'observer's effect' which positions the fieldworker as "a foreign body which causes ripples on the surface of smooth routinised processes". It is, therefore, imperative that the researcher reflects upon their relations and interactions with the participants (Bolin and Granskog, 2003), and offers their own voice and how this relates to others (Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, in line with the Bourdieusian perspective of epistemic reflexivity, I was also mindful to consider the wider biases that influence research, such as my social origins, my position within the academic field, and any intellectualist bias I may hold.

To address the issue of reflexivity, the method of bracketing is often used by qualitative researchers, though, there is a lack of clear definition and consensus of method of

bracketing (Tufford and Newman, 2012). Bracketing is not a single event of temporarily setting preconceptions aside, but a continual practice of self-discovery, uncovering emotions and experiences (Drew, 2004). One such method of bracketing is the use of a reflective journal or diary to identify any pre-conceptions throughout the research process (Ahern, 1999). However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p. 16) suggested that “rather than engaging in futile attempts to eliminate the effects of the researcher completely, we should set about understanding them”. The reflective diary was used in this study not to set aside my thoughts, feelings, and emotions but to understand and acknowledge them relative to all forms of data collection, including interview conversations. The consideration of reflexivity in data analysis is also discussed further in Section 4.12.

The position of the researcher and their status as an insider or outsider is also worthy of consideration in reflexive ethnographic research (Bolin and Granskog, 2003). Initially, in the first season, where I attended training but did not play competitive matches, I felt my role was peripheral as I was not participating in the core activity of match play, yet, I was active through involvement in the central activity of the group: training. Throughout this first season it proved difficult to become a true ‘insider’ within the group. I held no specific role on the netball court and could be viewed as “an outsider to the commonality shared by participants” (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 55). This is illustrated in my reflective diary entry:

Whilst working on the drills there is a slight distance between myself ... and the players as they work on set plays for matches ... I find myself having opinions on the court play and set plays but refrain from voicing them as I do not want to be seen as overpowering, plus my opinion or contribution is never asked for. Again, within sport if you're not part of the team it is difficult to become involved in that culture and to have a defined role within the group.

Reflective Diary, Season One, 29th February 2016

To overcome this crisis of identity, and attempt to change the way I was perceived, at the beginning of the second season I affiliated to the club and played for the second team, which involved becoming a member of England Netball and paying membership fees to both England Netball, the County Netball Association, and linking this membership to Uptown, an England Netball registered club. This transition to becoming an affiliated player with the

second team squad, was beneficial in terms of accessing the culture of the club more deeply, though, however much I considered myself to be 'one of the players', my motives for participation continued to act as a barrier to being myself. This also brought into question whether a 'complete member' is an achievable role in ethnography. I felt more comfortable with the players and no longer an outsider, but my role as a researcher prevented me from qualifying as an insider. My position was comparable to what Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p 60) labelled 'the space between'.

... I feel a lot more positive about my role at the club now. I feel like I have a place rather than simply observing from the periphery and that I have crossed some invisible boundary line. ... I feel this session has been an improvement on last season by being part of the team. I had a place, I had a position and I felt like I had a purpose. I still have a way to go to be a true 'insider' and there's so much I need to explore but I definitely have one foot inside the door!

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 5th September 2016

My reflective diary echoed the thoughts of Elias (1978), that complete detachment was unachievable, though, neither did I want it to be. As my skills developed as a researcher it became apparent that one can never be totally attached or totally involved, but instead operates along this continuum, altering the balance between the two. Indeed, it is proposed by Perry et al. (2004, p. 146) that "all stages of the research process can benefit from insider knowledge restrained by degrees of detachment".

4.11 The issue of friendship

Throughout the research the issue of friendship featured strongly and was a constant consideration. Friendship and fieldwork are suggested to be similar activities, involving the negotiation of many similar factors and Sands (2002, p. 36) holds the view that "ethnography cannot be a successful research method unless the fieldworker develops rapport and friendship with the cultural members being studied". The term 'friendship as method' was developed by Tillmann-Healy (2003, p. 730) to describe "researching with the practices, at the pace, in the natural contexts, and with an ethic of friendship". Though, as I discovered, 'friendship as method' is not uniform and I developed varied relationships with the participants, forming much closer relationships with some than others. Research

evidence is unclear as to how this can impact data collection, and Oakley (2016, p. 10) recognised that the “notion of friendship and its applicability to research relations, particularly in longitudinal studies, requires more explanation”. Developing friendship may lead to greater rapport and trust between the researcher and participant, but can also raise certain issues, whereby the researcher and participant are more vulnerable to each other (Owton and Allen-Collinson, 2014).

In the 2016-17 season, as a second team player, I formed genuine friendships with and affection for the players which, although proved fruitful in being welcomed into their homes, learning about their lives and enhancing the productivity of interviews, also caused me worry and anxiety in regard to what Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) termed an ‘ethics of care’, both towards the players and also to myself. Some players were considered ‘netball friends’ and with others a deeper friendship formed, where we not only became friends in netball circles but in life as well. My relationship with one participant saw our friendship extend beyond netball, to the point where we exchanged communication with one another outside of netball and attended netball events together:

Abbie comes and collects me and she’s looking very pretty and very different from when I see her at netball. She too confesses that it was difficult to pitch how dressed up to get. She pops inside and says hello to the kids and once they are settled with the babysitter we head off. I grab a couple of bottles of prosecco so we don’t arrive empty handed. Abbie feels bad she didn’t bring anything, so she takes one of mine which I say is a thank you for the lift. As we drive, we chat about who is going to be there and who has dropped out as well as who wasn’t invited. [...] We have a giggle trying to find the house as the sat nav navigates us through a local housing estate...

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 12 May 2017

One participant was already a close friend prior to the study, and my involvement in this research acted as a catalyst in her return to netball at Uptown, as I contacted her to play when we were short of players. A genuine friendship was already established and so the interview had a very different feel compared to some of the others:

I arrive at Lisa’s to be greeted by her dog and her two children. I played netball with Lisa years ago and we have always stayed in touch so it’s a very relaxed atmosphere.

She gets the kids a hot chocolate each and makes me a cup of tea and then we sit in the living room and conduct the interview. The time flies by and I realise that it's time we should be going. Luckily, we've pretty much covered everything in the interview. I leave Lisa to sort the kids out as they're having to come and watch her today with her husband being away and say I'll meet her there.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 12th March 2017

Prior to the study several players had been acquaintances I recognised from the local netball scene, and other participants were complete strangers. Therefore, each relationship started on a different footing, however, consistent with ethnographic research, the power imbalance was an important factor to consider in all relationships. This study adopted the use of friendship as method and followed the guidance by Tillmann-Healy (2003) to ensure that ethical consideration is given priority throughout the study, and participants are treated with respect, their stories are honoured and used in a compassionate and just manner.

4.12 Data analysis: reflective thematic analysis

The points raised throughout the discussion of rigour, reflexivity and friendship also influence and apply to the data analysis method. Qualitative research is an active process and, therefore, the selection of what to observe and document, along with the interpretation of this data are influenced by the researcher's presuppositions about the world (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2020b) proposed that there is 'rarely' one single method suitable for a research project and often a variety of options can be considered, but they stress the importance of the selection aligning with the ontological and epistemological stance of the research. Thematic analysis (TA) is used extensively in qualitative sport and exercise research (Braun and Clarke, 2019a), but, there is not one singular approach to TA. Instead, Braun and Clarke (2020b, p. 1) suggest:

TA is best thought of as a spectrum of methods – from types that prioritise coding accuracy and reliability to reflexive approaches like ours that emphasise the inescapable subjectivity of data interpretation.

Three broad types of TA are identified by Braun and Clarke (2020b): coding reliability approaches, reflexive approaches and codebook approaches. To align with the paradigmatic and epistemological assumptions of this study, the process of reflexive thematic analysis is used, whereby the researcher is central to the production of knowledge (Braun and Clarke, 2019a). In this process Braun and Clarke (2019a) refuted the passive emergence of themes from the data and instead advocated a more active and generative production of themes by the researcher using their analytic skill. The researcher knowingly engages and makes decisions in relation to the data, constantly questioning and querying their own assumptions about the data when interpreting and coding (Braun and Clarke, 2019a).

Quality reflexive TA is not about following procedures 'correctly' (or about 'accurate' and 'reliable' coding, or achieving consensus between coders), but about the researchers reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and **thorough** engagement with the analytic process.

(Braun and Clarke, 2019a, p. 594)

Thematic analysis can be deductive or inductive in nature. A deductive approach is typically associated with quantitative research (Bryman, 2016), and is used to confirm or refute existing understandings, such as proving a hypothesis drawn from theory or analysing the data according to an existing theoretical framework (Kennedy and Thornburg, 2018). A deductive analysis is directed by the theoretical interest of the researcher and is where the data fits the theory, known as a 'top-down' approach (Braun and Clarke, 2019a). In contrast, an inductive analysis, or 'bottom up' method, is where the themes are generated from the data rather than fitting the researchers pre-existing theoretical beliefs (Braun and Clarke, 2019a).

An inductive approach allows the data to be analysed without a theoretically informed coding frame (Willig, 2013). The researcher can also engage with the data in a semantic way, where coding is based on the obvious meaning expressed, or in a latent way where coding and analysis is developed around more implicit ideas that underpin what explicitly expressed (Clarke et al., 2016b). Throughout this study the data was predominantly approached and engaged with in an inductive and latent way, yet, in practice, as Clarke et

al. (2016b) acknowledged, most thematic analyses include both semantic and latent, and inductive and deductive elements.

4.13 Data analysis and the role of NVivo

Many researchers undertaking qualitative research consider the use of Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) or Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) although relatively little is known about how they use these programmes (Paulus et al., 2017). The NVivo programme is one example of software available and is an extremely effective means of managing, storing and retrieving data (Maher et al., 2018), and has been cited as increasing the rigour associated with qualitative research (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011). However, Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) also warned that there are limitations to using software. Some researchers suggest that software can remove the researcher from the closeness to the data, or conversely force them to be too close and not as reflective, and falling into the trap of operating a more mechanistic process of coding (Johnston, 2006). Using NVivo to explore themes can also be difficult due to limitations of what can be viewed on the screen at any one time (Walsh et al., 2018). It is proposed that to achieve the best results the most effective method is to combine the best features of both manual and computer assisted methods (Walsh et al., 2018). Indeed, it is the researcher that analyses the data and not the software (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011). In this study NVivo software was used to support the data analysis process and the write-up, with the software mainly as a tool to organise, store and retrieve data as opposed to a tool to conduct the data analysis.

4.14 Analysing the data

The process of reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This is a particular strand of TA that aligns with qualitative research and one which 'centres researcher reflexivity' (Braun et al., 2019). This study used the six-stage process identified by Braun and Clarke (2006) which included: familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing the themes identified; naming and defining the themes and producing the final report. However, during the study the more recent articulation of the 'six phase process' (Braun and Clarke, 2020a) was released and, as it aligned with the application of TA already implemented in this study, it is this more recent articulation that forms the sub-headings in this section. Though the process is presented in phases the

analysis process is not linear and one must move back and forth throughout the phases where appropriate (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke et al., 2016b). As proposed by Braun et al. (2019, p. 4) “It’s not a case of carefully climbing up each of the steps, it’s actively thinking about how you approach those”. The sections below describe, explain, and reflect upon the actions taken at each phase of this process, to provide as much clarity as possible for, what is in reality, a messy, complex interaction of reflecting and decision making.

4.14.1 Re-familiarisation with the data

This phase of the data analysis process began during data collection and then continued beyond the end of the data collection period over the duration of the study. All forms of data were collected by myself via interviews, observations and field notes and so throughout the study I was continuously familiarising myself with the data, building initial interpretations and thoughts as I went along. I transcribed all nine interviews, each within a week of them taking place which, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested, informs early data analysis and enables the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the data. A reflective diary was maintained throughout the study entailing field notes and observations, as well as my own emotions and feelings. This was an interpretative rather than simply a mechanical act and provided an effective means of familiarising myself with the data very early on in the study. Once all data had been collected, I revisited the entire data set to re-familiarise with the data once again ready to prepare for initial coding. As a relatively inexperienced researcher I was initially overwhelmed by the volume of data generated, but also excited at the nature of the data and how the thesis would evolve.

4.14.2 Generating systematic data coding

Generating the initial codes systematises the familiarisation process (Clarke et al., 2016b) and consists of identifying a feature of the data that is considered to be of interest to the research question (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Reflexive TA distinguishes between codes and themes:

codes can be thought of as entities that capture (at least) one observation display (usually just) one facet; themes, in contrast, are like multi-faceted crystals – they capture multiple observations or facets...

(Braun and Clarke, 2020a, p. 13)

Informally, I had been coding data throughout the fieldwork to shape and refine the research questions during the study, however, in this more formal stage I worked systematically through the entire data set, manually coding items. The NVivo program was used to record these codes with corresponding extracts from the interviews and reflective diaries. The systematic and logical nature of this task provided a sense of enjoyment; however, I was mindful as I worked through the data whether a new code needed to be generated or whether the data concerned could be coded by an existing code. During this phase I followed the advice of Braun and Clarke (2006) to ensure I coded for as many themes as possible, coded using extracts of data to maintain context, and coded extracts with more than one code where applicable. Although this was primarily an inductive process, it was important to acknowledge that, when considering the interviews and what questions to ask, I had to some extent already thematised. There are no set number of codes that are considered ideal and so I stopped coding when I reached a natural conclusion, ending the phase as Clarke et al. (2016b) advised, “with your data thoroughly coded, and all your codes, and the data relevant to each code, collated ready for the next phase”. At the end of this phase I was truly familiar with every single aspect of the data set and had arrived at 118 codes and sub-codes (See Appendix G). At this stage I did not know if this was too many or too few, but I had started to think about overarching themes.

4.14.3 Generating initial themes

At the beginning of this third phase I had collated and coded the entire data set, resulting in lists of codes and sub codes, and through this process I had begun to form ideas as to how to group the codes together. The term ‘generating’ has been used in this phase to reflect the view of Braun et al. (2019, p. 4) that “theme development is an active process” and that themes do not simply emerge from the data. Themes are ‘a central organising concept’ and, therefore, should not simply be a summary of a topic but instead an idea or understanding that all of the codes come back to (Braun et al., 2019). The notion by Braun and Clarke

(2020a) that themes can bring ideas together that may seem unrelated, and that they can be considered as stories the researcher tells about their data resonated with me. To become as active as possible in this process I opted to complete this phase manually, as I found NVivo inhibiting and experienced similar issues to those described by Walsh et al. (2018), where I was unable to view all data required on the screen at any one time. Within this stage I followed the recommendation by Braun and Clarke (2006), to write the name of the code on a small piece of paper and physically move the papers around to organise them into themes. This was time consuming, but I found the visual and kinaesthetic aspect of this method allowed me to work 'with' the data rather than the more abstract tool of NVivo, where I felt like I was working 'on' the data.

It is during this stage that the relationship between codes, themes and levels of themes should be considered (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Developing themes involves the process of grouping codes to identify higher level patterns with the aim to capture multiple ideas that have 'layers' (Clarke et al., 2016b). As I began to develop the main themes, I also assembled a 'miscellaneous' theme where I placed any codes that did not yet fall under any theme, adhering to the suggestion by Braun and Clarke (2006) not to 'abandon' any data at this stage. Once I was satisfied that all codes had been allocated, I devised an initial thematic map based on seven draft themes; Negotiation, Priority, Support, Drive, Club Culture, Identity and Meaning (see Figure 4.1). It was difficult at this stage to see how they all connected, and I found many codes were related to multiple themes.

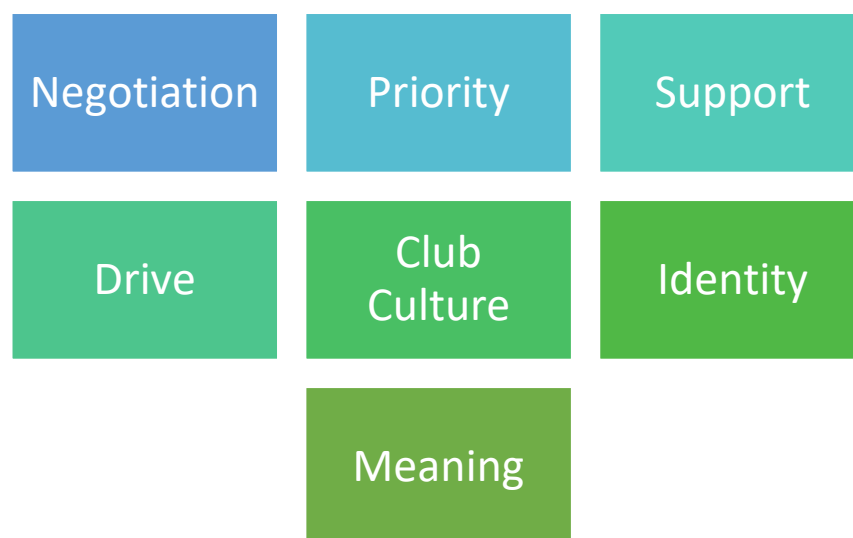


FIGURE 4.1 SEVEN INITIAL THEMES

4.14.4 Developing and reviewing themes

At this phase I revisited the definition of a theme by Braun and Clarke (2019a, p. 594):

creative and interpretive stories about the data, produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill, and the data themselves.

With this definition in mind I began the two levels of review advised at this stage. The first involves reading all data extracts for each theme and making a decision as to whether they form a clear pattern, followed by the second level, where the entire data set is re-read and the validity of individual themes are considered (Braun and Clarke, 2006). By completing the first level of analysis I identified that some of my themes included many overlapping codes and, therefore, were perhaps too similar. For example, 'Meaning', 'Drive' and 'Negotiation' had many codes in common, as did 'Club Culture' and 'Identity'. In addition, the name of some of the themes did not necessarily capture the essence of the data placed within them and so required moderation to either merge with another theme or be renamed. There was also a need to distinguish between the different life stages and introduce a theme that represented childhood experiences, as there were so many codes that related only to childhood. This meant that the support theme no longer worked across the entire data set. This stage was the lengthiest process of the thematic analysis and involved moving backwards and forwards between the data items and data extracts until I was happy that the themes worked together to tell the overall story. This phase involved a complete re-familiarisation with the entire data set, reviewing the codes again as I worked through the data, coding anything that had been missed and reframing codes where necessary. Towards the end of this phase I used mind maps to visually represent the data to provide greater clarity between the codes and themes. One of the issues at this phase is knowing when to stop coding data and generating themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006), however, I reached a stage where I had a good idea of the three key themes and how they worked together to represent the data to tell the story of the research. As described by Braun et al. (2019, p. 7), "you don't finish analysis, you stop".

4.14.5 Refining, defining and naming themes

This phase, labelled 'define and refine', is where the themes are described in detail and involves an explanation of what data each theme captures. Each theme must undergo a detailed analysis and be written up to explain the role each theme plays in telling the overall story and how the theme relates to, but does not overlap too much with, other themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To enable me to write up the analysis of each theme I revisited the data extracts placed within each theme and organised these to tell the story. One of the most difficult aspects of this was naming each theme, which Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 93) advised, "need to be concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about". I found 'meaning and negotiation' and 'club and community' worked well in providing a story for different aspects of the women's participation, though the third theme proved far more complex. Originally, I labelled this theme 'Childhood Experiences', but on reflection this title felt more like a topic, and failed to capture the vast array of data within this theme including the very important transitions the women made from junior to adult sport. This theme did not only tell a story of childhood, but a story of their journey through childhood and into adulthood, which is what led to the title 'From girl to woman'. The three overarching themes are shown in Figure 4.2 along with a brief explanation of each theme.

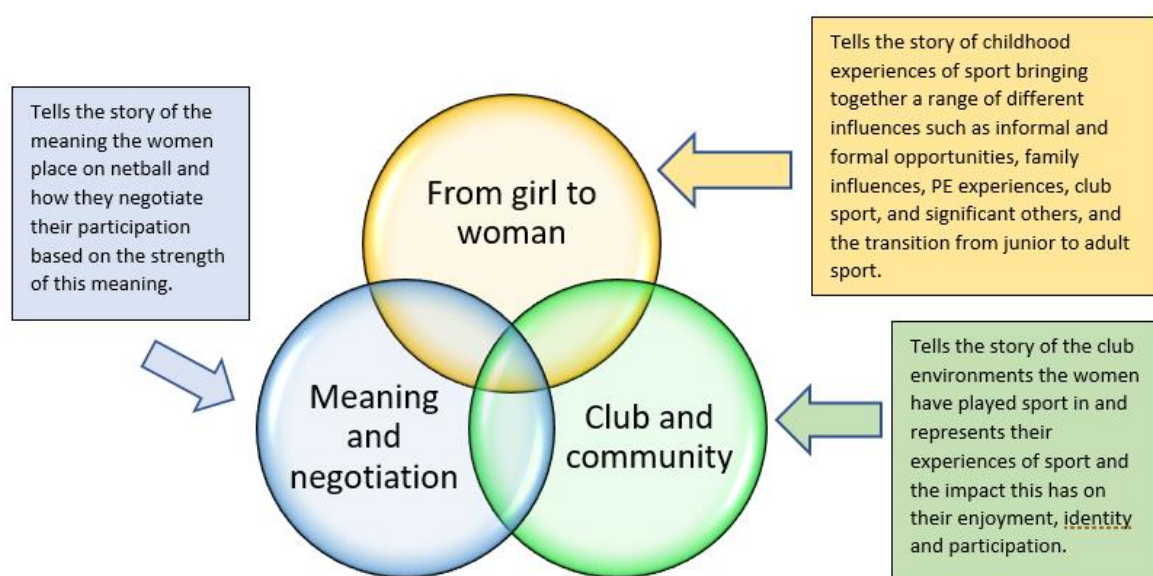


FIGURE 4.2 THE THREE KEY THEMES GENERATED FROM THE DATA

As the diagram shows all three themes are inextricably linked with an overlapping of influences and concepts that tell the overall story of the data.

4.14.6 Writing the report

The final stage of thematic analysis is the writing of the report. The writing process is an integral aspect of the research methodology and Picken (2009) described how ethnographers 'write through' rather than 'write up' their research. As outlined previously, it is the researcher's interpretation of the data that needs to be taken into account and it is through the writing process that I have been able to bring together the rich data and my own insight into the social setting at the club, and the interactions between this and participants' previous childhood and family experiences of sport. This is achieved through using the participants' own voices, as well as my own observations and interpretations. In writing such findings, it is crucial that good conduct in research ethics is employed, as suggested by Mellick and Fleming (2010, p. 302), "to avoid (or at least to minimize) harm(s) and to protect the anonymity and privacy when research findings are put into the public domain".

4.15 Chapter conclusion

This chapter was formed of two parts. The first part discussed the ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches of this study and explained how they are positioned within the qualitative research paradigm. Within this section I also discussed ethnography as a methodological approach for this study, as well as explaining the methods used to collect data. Part two considered key discussions of issues relevant to conducting the research including ethical considerations and access, data protection, trustworthiness and rigour, reflexivity, the process of data analysis and the methods used. This final section culminates in explaining how the choice of using reflexive thematic analysis fits within the nature of this research and sets the scene for the research findings discussed in the remaining chapters. There are links between the epistemological approach and Bourdieu's work, largely through the importance of epistemic reflexivity. Furthermore, to explore the habitus and dispositions of the players it was vital that I was able to create relationships with them and understand them in the reality of their everyday lives. Prior to discussing the

research findings, the next chapter provides the context for the study through a rich and detailed introduction of the club and the participants.

Chapter 5: Setting the scene

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents deep and rich descriptions of the setting and the participants to facilitate a detailed understanding of the women that is essential to the meaning of the thesis and the aims of the research. The environment, values, and culture of Uptown Netball Club are considered, before moving on to introduce each of the nine netball players, in order of appearance in the study. Prior to Chapters 6-8 which analyse the women's netball experiences in detail, this chapter uses vignettes as a "technique to capture how meanings, beliefs, judgements and actions are situationally positioned" (Barter and Renold, 2000, p. 308). The vignettes provide context through detailed descriptions of the women and their lives to gain a sense of familiarity with each participant, generating warmth, feeling and emotion through humanising the research participants and, as advocated by Carlson (2010), to connect the reader emotionally to the participants. The women are all living in multiple fields with multiple identities, each holding differing levels of symbolic capital in different fields and this chapter describes how the women operate between these overlapping fields.

5.2 Uptown Netball Club

Uptown Netball Club is the only performance-based club in the local area, with two adult teams, boasting the only regional level team in the City. The club itself has been running for over 25 years, although during that time it has undergone many name changes, several coaches, and a vast turnover of players. Uptown is the 'go to' club for the best players in the city and is held in high esteem by the local netball community. If a player reveals that they play for Uptown the assumption is that they are a very good netballer and that they take their netball seriously. As a club, Uptown possesses greater symbolic capital than any other clubs in the local area. Although regarded as 'the best' in the area, the first team have gradually dropped through the leagues from Regional Division 1 to Regional Division 3, almost folding a few years ago following relegation from Division 2. At this point the only option was to play County Premier League, an outdoor league of considerably lower standard, which few of the players were prepared to enter. Luckily the first team were saved by the creation of a Regional Division 3. Despite their standing in the local netball community Uptown holds a reputation of being unfriendly, unwelcoming and bitchy

amongst local netballers, which can prevent them from attracting new players. This information was gained from my own knowledge of the local netball scene and admission by the Uptown players themselves during the study.

The Club has two adult teams that play at different standards and one junior team. The first team play regional level netball and the second team initially played county premier level in the first season but were relegated to the district league in the second season. Like most netball clubs of this standard Uptown does not have its own club house but relies on hiring facilities. The juniors train at a school on a Saturday morning and the two adult teams train together at a local sports centre on a Monday evening 7.30-9.00pm. The sports centre is attached to a school and has recently undergone refurbishment, as the school has rebranded as an academy, though the facilities are far from salubrious. As part of this renovation a brand-new sports hall has been added at the back of the centre, housing one netball court, which the club book each season. To access this new sports hall, you first walk through reception, which is already looking tired and worn, displaying scuffed walls and stained carpets, a result of the heavy traffic of students it receives every day. As you walk through reception you pass the gym, which is basic but functional, and the fitness studio which is often vibrant and pumping out music on a Monday evening due to a timetabled spin class. Just after the studio you turn left down a narrow corridor, which at the end houses the very basic changing room and toilet facilities, offering a less than pleasant aroma with an invisible supply of toilet paper and soap. Prior to reaching the changing rooms located on the right-hand side of the dimly lit passage, is a set of heavy wooden double doors leading into the old sports hall. This hall is reminiscent of the old school sports halls of the 1980s and 1990s, with the orange brown floor containing an array of different court markings in various colours. Despite its tiredness the old hall is often a hive of activity, with people playing badminton or basketball, making navigation to the newer sports hall a tricky business. It's like an inadvertent game of dodgeball, evading any balls or shuttlecocks that come flying that way, to reach a white set of double doors offering the safe territory of the new sports hall, the 'home' of Uptown on a Monday evening. The contrast between the two halls is striking: with its bright blue floor and fresh white walls the new hall presents a stark difference to its frumpy brown predecessor. The change in air temperature is also striking, as upon entering you get blasted by brutal air conditioning,

causing one to shiver in comparison to the stuffy, sweaty brown hall. The change in environment also seems to reflect the more serious and quiet nature of those turning up to play netball, in contrast to the noisy and entertaining shrieks from the basketballers.

Players congregate in the new hall waiting for the coach to signal the start of the session, typically with the first team huddled on the far left and the second team forming a group just inside the door. There is no social space such as a café or bar within the sports centre, making it feel very functional, as a hired, temporary space rather than the home of the club. This is reflected in the fact that the first team do not play their home games here, but instead hire the indoor facilities at a local private school to play their Saturday morning fixtures. The private venue, although older and smaller, is better maintained creating a homelier feel, set in picturesque grounds, with an additional social space to hold the after-match tea. In stark contrast to this luxury the second team play their matches at a fixed outdoor venue, housing several leagues all playing at once, across four concrete courts, which is open to all the elements.

The club collectively pays one coach on a weekly basis to attend Monday night training and train both teams together. Tara is the coach for the first season of the study and then, due to personal circumstances, she is forced to step down and is replaced by Caroline in the second season. Caroline is also the junior coach and continues to coach all three squads during the second season. As a result, the more talented junior players begin to attend the adult training, as Caroline is keen to develop their talent and provide opportunities for adult netball. Under both coaches, training sessions typically involved both teams working on the same drills but at opposite ends of the hall, with the junior players working with the second team. If ever the coach is unavailable then Emma, the first team captain, typically steps in to take training.

5.3 Emma: the first team captain

As first team captain, Emma is the glue that holds the club together, and my key gatekeeper at the club. I was given her number by a mutual friend and as soon as I had contacted her, she was extremely supportive and amenable, helping me with any aspect of the research even though she leads a very busy life. Emma is 32 and is employed as an intelligence

development officer, a civilian post within the police, working 37 hours a week in various shift patterns (8am-4pm, 7am-3pm or 2-11pm), including one weekend in six. She lives with her wife and their four-year-old daughter, who has just started school. Her wife is a workshop controller at a garage and works 8.15am-5.15pm and in the distribution of household tasks takes their daughter to breakfast club at school most days. Support is provided by Emma's wife's parents who also help with childcare by picking Emma's daughter up from school and giving her dinner every day before Emma collects her. Emma admits that netball pretty much takes over her life for the beginning of the week with training on a Monday night, and coaching at another local club on a Tuesday evening. Even when at home Emma finds herself having to answer emails and Facebook messages about netball, which can often cause tension with her wife. In addition to netball Emma tries to keep herself fit and runs about 3-4 times a week as well as going to the gym at work during breaks.

Emma had a very active childhood herself being the youngest of six children, with four older brothers and an older sister. The majority of her time outside of school was spent with her siblings playing football, rugby and cricket, often being shoved in goal so the others could take shots at her. At school Emma played in all the school sports teams and participated in netball throughout primary and secondary school, as well as County U16, transitioning into adult netball in her late teens, and playing at regional level. Emma did not grow up in the local area and moved here with her ex-partner a few years ago, and, therefore, played the majority of her netball in a different county. When Emma first moved to the city, she played with Downtown Netball club for two seasons until the coach told her she should be playing at a higher standard. This prompted Emma to move across to Uptown where, after several years, she is now first team captain. Her playing capabilities, organisational skills, and her status at the club affords her great symbolic capital and in terms of power and dynamics Emma clearly sits at the head of the club. Her humble and gentle nature and her willingness to involve others in decision making ensures that such power dynamics cause little friction at the club. Emma hopes to inspire other younger players, like she was inspired by some of her teachers, coaches and teammates. As captain Emma feels that the most important thing is that the team have played well, if she comes off the court and believes that they have not played the best they can then she finds this frustrating. As Emma gets older, she is

contemplating retirement and is becoming more aware of the issues that raising her daughter may have on time for playing netball.

The Interview: It was a fairly straightforward process to arrange Emma's interview as she opted for me to go to her house on a day that she was working a late shift, and so I was able to interview Emma in the morning while her daughter was at school and her wife was at work. It was a very relaxed atmosphere and Emma openly welcomed me into her home. Emma was much the same as she was at netball, kind, calm and extremely humble.

5.4 Isabella: the mature 'original' player

During my first training session at the club I recognised Isabella immediately from the local netball scene many years ago, as we had often played against each other and have some mutual friends in common. Isabella was, and still is, a furiously competitive player on court and even at training. She only operates at 100%, which sometimes seems to annoy the others. Isabella is one of the oldest members of the club at 39 years old and is married with three children aged 11, 9, and 4, with the youngest still in pre-school. She is a trained primary school teacher and works part time although confesses that she would happily give it up. At netball Isabella appears confident but, as I got to know her better, she reveals that she suffers from stress and anxiety, contributing to her reducing her working hours to two days a week following the birth of her third child. Her husband is incredibly supportive and shares childcare and household tasks including getting the children ready in the mornings. He works in IT for a bank and leaves around 8.30am returning at 6pm every day, and so as part of their shared responsibility Isabella prepares dinner each day just after 6 o'clock. To ensure that the household runs smoothly, Isabella and her husband have regular planning meetings and a synchronised diary so they can always see what each other, and the children, have planned.

As a child, family time was mainly spent 'doing church things' with lots of visitors to the house, as Isabella's dad ran a church. Isabella embraced sports at school and has played netball since she was eleven, being selected by her teachers for a scheme in the city called 'Champion Coaching', where she began playing for a local club. Isabella also progressed to playing county netball at U16, though Isabella did not have a particularly good experience,

as she rarely got picked and felt that the coach did not like her. Isabella feels quite frustrated by her netball and reflects that if she had received more support with her netball either from her parents or her county coach then perhaps it could have led somewhere when she was younger, but that she just left it too late. In sixth form Isabella rebelled and did not play any netball at all but picked it up again when she went to university. Upon moving back to the city after university Isabella played for Uptown and has been there ever since. Isabella acknowledges the age difference between her and the majority of the first team conceding that the experience is very different to when she played in a team of her friends, who have since retired. Isabella's physical capital is highly respected at the club, as she is an extremely talented player. Her quirky personality and fierce competitiveness on court is often a cause of amusement to some of the other players, yet, because of her experience and ability Isabella's level of symbolic capital affords her acceptability within the team.

Isabella is currently experiencing a shift in priorities with a greater focus on her other hobbies, mainly her own writing, performing and play writing. A new church group that she is attending is becoming more important to her and she can see her other hobbies, and the children's activities, pushing netball further down her list of priorities, especially as she feels her body is beginning to fail her.

The Interview: It was a slightly more complex process organising Isabella's interview, as when she was not at work, she had her youngest child with her. Isabella opted for her interview to be at a garden centre café with a soft play area, so that her son could play while we did the interview. It was an interesting experience as we sat and had a coffee while Isabella's son zoomed in and out of the play area, coming back for a drink now and again, and Isabella going to check on him every so often. Isabella was extremely accommodating and had a genuine interest in the research above and beyond her own role as a participant.

5.5 Kerry: the quietly competitive player

Kerry is also present at the first training session and although I have never played netball with her, I recognise her from a different walk of life, as she used to be a primary school teacher at my children's school. Kerry gives a shy 'hello' and initially appears as one of the

quieter players in the team, but I soon learn that behind this quiet façade she is an extremely self-driven, determined and competitive person. Kerry is 29 years old, recently married, and has a list of things she wants to achieve by the time she is 30: running a marathon; running a cross country; running a 5k in under 22 minutes; running a half marathon under one hour forty-five; and playing in the County Premier Netball League without getting relegated. To achieve this most of her evenings are occupied by sport or physical activity, including playing in two local mixed netball leagues and weekly personal training sessions.

Kerry began her career as a primary school teacher but has recently changed professions and now works full time for the council in education planning, where she faces a daily commute of around an hour each way. Although her actual working hours, including the commute, are longer she has less stress and less additional work to do at home. Part of her decision to move jobs involved wanting to make the move out of teaching prior to starting a family. Kerry is one of five children herself with two older brothers and two younger brothers (twins) and she describes her childhood as very active, with sailing being the main family pastime. She also comments on the general competitiveness of having so many siblings and the chaos that living in the household with four brothers entailed.

Kerry played netball at primary and secondary school but did not play for a club during her youth. She is one of the few players who did not grow up in the area and moved to the city in her twenties with her husband. With the primary aim of making some friends Kerry joined a B2N scheme run by Downtown Netball Club, which is where she met Rebecca and, as her skills developed, she decided to join Uptown to play at a better standard. Her first season at Uptown was a little turbulent, however, she feels that the second season with Rebecca as captain and some new players in the team is much better. Towards the end of the study Kerry confides in me at one training session that she is around 12 weeks pregnant. Kerry continues to play netball until the 20-week scan and even runs 16 miles of the Manchester Marathon, maintaining her fitness throughout the pregnancy.

The Interview: Kerry opted to come to my home for her interview one evening following her session at the track. It was relatively late in the evening and so my children were in bed and

my husband was at home. Kerry was very bubbly and laughing throughout the interview and it was just like sitting chatting to a friend. She was very open and amenable to the questions and I got to learn much more about her as a person.

5.6 Rebecca: the intense, focused player

Rebecca and Kerry are very good friends although upon initially meeting Rebecca I am surprised as they appeared to be very different characters, furthermore Rebecca seemed different to everyone else on the team. She is extremely motivated and driven in everything she does and expects others to have the same level of commitment and drive, unable at times to tolerate those that do not. Sometimes this intensity can appear forthright and brusque in manner, although over the two seasons Rebecca shows herself to be a very supportive and caring person. Rebecca is 31 and married with two children of primary school age. She is a primary school teacher herself and works part time, four days a week, as well as teaching swimming lessons on a Friday evening. Rebecca plays mixed netball as well, attends a running club and has weekly PT sessions. To help fit all this in she has lots of support from both sets of parents who pick the children up from school and give them dinner most days, as well as a childminder in the mornings. Her husband, a self-employed carpenter, also plays football and they are both supportive of one another's sport, trying to watch each other play as and when they can.

Rebecca has always been active and as a child she and her older sister enjoyed a range of sports, including swimming. Rebecca swam at a much higher level than her sister, making it through to the English school's finals and gaining a place in a potential talent programme. Although Rebecca was always active, netball did not really feature in her childhood, as her secondary school did not have a netball team, so she played hockey instead. At university Rebecca swam in a few galas but did not join any of the sports teams. It was not until she was 26 that she decided to take up netball with a friend and joined a local B2N scheme at Downtown Netball Club. After three seasons playing for Downtown Rebecca decided she wanted to improve more and needed a greater challenge, so both she and Kerry moved across to Uptown.

Rebecca's first season of playing at Uptown for the second team was not a positive experience and she found it incredibly frustrating, although she enjoyed it much more in the second season with a steady team regularly available and attending training. Rebecca's symbolic capital developed with the second team over the two seasons as she was an efficient and effective captain and very much embraced the role of organising and team selection. After running a marathon in April Rebecca injured her ankle and so was out of action for the rest of the season, though it turned out that the injury was more serious than anticipated and she has been unable to play since.

The Interview: Rebecca opted to come to my house for her interview. She shrewdly took in the surroundings and commented on the sports equipment in the garden drawing parallels between our gardens. The interview began rather formally but as we progressed through, we both seemed to relax, and it was an interesting process to get to know Rebecca's thoughts and feelings around certain issues. The interview certainly seemed to help ease our relationship with one another.

5.7 Abbie: the committed, organised player

During my first few sessions at the club I often paired up with Abbie during drills as we were the newcomers to Uptown in the first season, both training with the second team but not yet part of the squad. Abbie is an extremely motivated and dedicated team player who transferred to Uptown from another local team. She is 26 years old and after recently moving back to the city lives at home with her mum and dad, to save a deposit for her own house. Abbie is a kitchen designer working for the family kitchen business run by her uncle, with a typical working week of 9-5.30pm Monday to Friday plus every other Saturday. Abbie enjoys her weekly routine which involves playing netball four times a week, Zumba or clubbercise with her mum and sister one evening, and time for seeing friends. Abbie also has a boyfriend of two years who she sees several times a week depending upon their commitments, as he plays first team hockey for a local club. However, this relationship came to an end towards the closing stages of the study.

Abbie comes from a close family who all live locally with sport featuring as part of family life, which resulted in a very active childhood. Abbie's relationship with netball started at

secondary school when a PE teacher encouraged her to attend a netball summer school and join a club. This resulted in Abbie's club netball experience beginning with a junior team who played in an adult league. After leaving school Abbie moved away with work but came home as much as possible to play netball, picking up games for several different teams, however the constant travelling made it exhausting. Abbie then moved to London where she tried to join a netball club, but her working hours made it difficult to commit and so she stopped playing.

Upon leaving her job in London and returning to her home city Abbie began training with Uptown for the first season and then transferred across to play for them in the second season. Although a very good player Abbie is content playing for the second team and admits that she has little interest in becoming a first team player, mainly because of the increased time commitment and travelling. Abbie also prefers the fun, less competitive leagues than Sunday morning women's netball. Throughout the two years Abbie encounters a couple of injuries; a back injury, although she continues to play pretty much throughout this even though she is in some pain, and an ankle injury, which initially she thinks is just a sprain until a week later she decides to visit the doctors to be told she has fractured her ankle. This injury comes in March and Abbie is upset to miss the last few games of the season, although she still manages to gain the players' player of the season award at the presentation night, a testament to her popularity and playing ability.

The Interview: My interview with Abbie was very relaxed. She opted to visit my house for the interview and we simply chatted about Abbie's life right through from childhood to the present day. We were already good friends by this point and so conversation just flowed naturally.

5.8 Hannah: the funny, loud player

Hannah's attendance at training is fairly minimal and so I do not meet her until later during the season, but I recognise her face from playing in the local mixed leagues. I soon realise that she is one of the louder characters within the second team and is always having a laugh and joke. She is a 35-year-old PE teacher with the added responsibility of holding the position of learning director at a secondary school. Hannah works full time Monday-Friday

with a typical working day of 7.45-5.30 although, as most PE teachers do, she often stays later for sports fixtures. Hannah enjoys her job but is at the point in her career where progressing further and taking on more responsibility would mean taking her away from teaching PE, which is the part of the job that she enjoys the most. Hannah has her own house and she is single with no children but her biggest commitment are her two dogs.

As well as working full time at the school, every spare minute of Hannah's life appears to be filled with activity. She trains for Uptown on a Monday evening, plays in a local netball league on Tuesday evening, works in her dad's pub on a Wednesday, plays mixed netball on a Thursday evening with Friday evening set aside for socialising. On Saturday, Hannah sometimes gets drafted in to play for Uptown first team if they are short, but she also helps her sister teach dance, with Sunday being almost a full day of netball, playing for Uptown 2 in the mornings and in a local mixed league in the evenings.

Hannah comes from a close family and spends a lot of time with her mum and dad and one of her younger sisters, although her youngest sister has moved away. Both parents encouraged and supported all three girls to be musical and active growing up and all three girls danced, swam, and played an instrument. Hannah's main sport throughout her childhood was swimming, with an intense schedule of morning and evening training with galas most weekends. Hannah was making national qualifying times and continued swimming throughout sixth form, although her performance peaked around the age of 14-15. Hannah also played netball throughout secondary school as well as county netball and local adult netball, before moving to university and continuing to play there. Hannah moved to Uptown in the second season to play a higher standard of netball, with ambitions to break into the first team and play regional netball. Hannah admits that her fitness is currently preventing her reaching this standard, as well as an ongoing knee injury that she has to manage throughout the season, which causes her to miss a lot of the Monday night training sessions.

The Interview: As I knew Hannah previously and I anticipated that she would be fairly easy going and forthcoming with information, I opted to interview Hannah first to hone my interview skills. Hannah came to my house, which was her choice, and quite surprising as my

house is a half an hour drive from where she lives. She also brought her dog with her as she can't be left alone for too long. The interview was perhaps the shortest one as I was just developing my skills at this point, however, because Hannah was so talkative it went well, although upon transcribing the interview I did realise that I needed to pause at times and let the interviewee think rather than filling the silences with further questions.

5.9 Sam: the laid-back player

Sam appears one of the easiest going people on the team and she makes her return to Uptown second team during the first season, coming back to netball after the birth of her son. She just gets on with things and nothing seems to phase her at netball. She has always got a smile on her face and is generally friendly and upbeat. Sam is 30 years old and got married between the first and second season. Sam has a degree in law and works part-time as a legal advisor at an insurance company on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, with her office around an hour commute each way. Her husband, who is a ground worker, also works long hours and leaves the house at 6am and returns about 6pm. Even though her mum and mother-in-law help with childcare she finds the long hours quite difficult with a young child and admits that she is the type of person who stresses over things, which is different to how she appears at netball. In particular, on a Monday evening Sam would prefer to be at home preparing for the following day rather than being out at training until 9pm. During the study Sam changes jobs to a local firm to reduce the commute and the stress this was placing on her and her family. The balance of part-time working is something that Sam values and enjoys as she uses the days at home to spend time with her son and completing all the household tasks. Sam goes running when she can and is trying to build up her distance, but netball is her only organised sport and so she trains on a Monday evening and plays on a Sunday morning for Uptown 2, also playing in the mixed leagues on a Thursday and Sunday if she has not played in the morning and has nothing else on.

Growing up neither of Sam's two older sisters took part in sport but Sam enjoyed gymnastics and cross country, reaching the English schools for cross country at around 12-13 years. Sam stopped running around the age of 16 but, after playing netball through primary and secondary school, she decided to stick with netball as a sport. At college she tried to establish a team but that was not very successful, but when at university she joined

the university team and trained and played every week throughout her time there. During holidays she would come back from university and play for a local club on a Sunday as well as for the mixed leagues on a Thursday and Sunday evening. When she returned home full time she continued to play for the same club for several years before deciding that she wanted to play at a higher level in the County Premier League, and so moved across to Uptown. She played for a couple of seasons before falling pregnant and during the study Sam returned after having her son to play for the second team. Sam has no ambition to play for Uptown first team as she feels it would take up too much of her time, and she is happy playing at her current standard. Netball is very much a part of her life and always has been, however, it does not appear to influence the rest of her life.

The Interview: Sam asked me to interview her at her house on one of her days off and gave me a time where she knew her son would be having a nap. When I arrived at the house he had just gone to sleep and so we sat in the kitchen for the interview. It was interesting to see Sam in her home environment, she seemed much more assertive than she was at netball, and much more confident. We managed to fit the interview in before her son woke up and I was a little disappointed not to meet him.

5.10 Anna: the newest player

Anna joined Uptown at the beginning of the second season and at the age of 25 is new to the adult netball scene in the area. Anna studied Law at university but after graduating lived and worked in Spain for a couple of years as an estate agent in a sports resort. Since moving back to the UK Anna lives with her parents while she is saving to move in with her long-term boyfriend. She works Monday to Friday 9am-5pm for the local council as a legal officer in the child protection team and as a hotel gym receptionist two evenings a week from 5.30-9pm. She is also striving to set up her own wine business. With two jobs and setting up a business Anna manages her time carefully. Unlike many of the other participants Anna only plays netball for Uptown and does not play in any other local leagues. However, as well as playing netball Anna is also training for the London Marathon which she incorporates within her typical week. When Anna does have spare time, she spends it with her boyfriend.

Anna appears to be very close to her mum and dad and her younger brother. Anna and her younger brother had a very active childhood, both swimming competitively, as well as sampling a range of other sports. Throughout school Anna played netball but, as she used to do shift work in the evenings, she never made the transition to a local club. Upon moving to university Anna worked in a restaurant in the evenings, and disliked the cliques of university sport, so stopped playing. Anna played some netball during her time in Spain and upon moving back to the UK took up netball again to be physically active as well as for the social benefits. Anna is happy playing with the second team and prefers their team culture to that of the first team, describing it as “competitive without being unfriendly”. Anna’s netball ambitions are simply to continue to improve and establish a set position with the team, which throughout the season she manages to achieve, claiming the WA position on a regular basis. Towards the end of the season Anna encounters an ankle injury following her half marathon in March and so her participation at netball is minimal between this and the London marathon. Following the London marathon Anna also misses the last few training sessions of the season and does not attend the end of season social.

Interview: Anna decided to have her interview at my house prior to training, as my house was located on the way. She is renowned for getting lost and poor direction so upon her arrival we joked that she had done well to get here, although I had to go outside and show her exactly which house. During the interview Anna spotted my wine rack in the corner of the dining room, and a conversation ensued about wine. From then on at training and matches we would often have a chat about her wine business and any new wines she had sampled.

5.11 Lisa: the returning player

Lisa and I are old friends and played netball together for several years in our early twenties. In the second season Uptown 2 were struggling for players and although Lisa had retired from women’s netball (she used to be Uptown first team captain) I asked her to come down and help us out one match in January, to which she agreed. Lisa then ended up staying and being part of the second team for the rest of the season.

Lisa is 35 years old, married with two children at primary school and works full time in the local FE College as a hairdressing assessor. Due to working full time and having two very active children Lisa originally decided to give up playing netball to allow more time to be spent with the family, but found that she missed the 'me time' that netball afforded her to de-stress. She also admits that what she enjoys about netball is being part of a team and the connections with other people to win games that she cannot replicate from running or going to the gym.

Lisa's typical week involves her working Monday to Friday with most evenings taken up by her children's activities. Her son is a very talented footballer and plays for several different academies training Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings. This results in Lisa's husband spending most evenings with their son while Lisa stays at home with their daughter or vice versa. Her daughter also plays football and trains on Monday evening and plays on a Saturday. Lisa also tries to play netball on a Sunday evening in the local mixed league. Due to this busy schedule Lisa struggles to make training on a Monday evening.

Lisa's family background is very different to the others as her father died when she was eleven and so her mum raised her and her sister as a single parent, whilst also running a hairdressing business. None of Lisa's family were sporty, however, Lisa became interested in gymnastics at the age of five and continued her passion for sport from there. Lisa played netball throughout primary and secondary school but when she left school was unaware of adult netball and so stopped. It was not until she was 19 and met some new friends that they told her they still played netball and that she should come and play. Lisa played for a local club for years until it folded and then she moved over to Uptown where she played first team netball and became first team captain. Initially Lisa was unsure about playing for Uptown 2, as upon retiring she said she would never play outside again, however, after coming down for her first match and meeting the team she continued to play throughout the second half of the season, becoming an important part of the team.

The Interview: Lisa is an old teammate of mine from years ago when I used to play and so she invited me to her house prior to a Sunday morning match. I had been to Lisa's several times before and so went in and said hello to the children before we started the interview.

We sat in her living room with a coffee and chatted and time flew so quickly we realised it was time to leave for netball. She had to sort the children and her dog, so I left to leave her to it and met her again at the game.

5.12 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has established an emotional connection with the participants and provided a detailed background to their lives and Uptown Netball club that is essential to understanding the discussion of the findings and analysis. Each of the nine players entered the research with their own individual story comprising unique elements to their biographies, and a range of influences and experiences that have shaped who they are. Nevertheless, upon comparing their biographies commonalities exist in the nature of the fields that they operate within. Most obviously all nine women play netball and possess a self-motivation and drive to stay active. Many are either teachers or possess a degree (with two in law), therefore, they all occupy a relatively similar space in the field of social classes with similar levels of educational capital. Although in terms of social class this presents quite a narrow sample, there are differences identified within this stratum. The women grew up in families with slightly different backgrounds and structures, some had extremely active parents, and some of the women did not start playing club netball until adulthood. Their varied netball experiences and routes into netball, as well as their current roles within the club, afford them differing levels of symbolic capital reflected in the power and hierarchies in operation within the field of netball. The next few chapters examine their stories more deeply to establish common themes between the women's experiences to further understand female netball participation, as well as identifying individual differences and what factors may have shaped these.

Chapter 6: From girl to woman: a sporting journey

6.1 Introduction

The vignette of Uptown Netball Club alongside the vignettes of the nine women in the study, detailed in Chapter 5, provide the context to the study and allow for an added appreciation and understanding of the data presented in the next three chapters. This chapter is the first instalment of three chapters that collectively tells the story of the data by analysing the three themes, as identified in Chapter 4, that are inextricably linked through an overlapping of influences and concepts reflected in the women's narratives and my ethnographic observations (replicated in Figure 6.1). This chapter provides the introduction to this analysis by addressing the theme 'From girl to woman' which tells the story of the women's sports socialisation as a child throughout their adolescence and into adulthood.

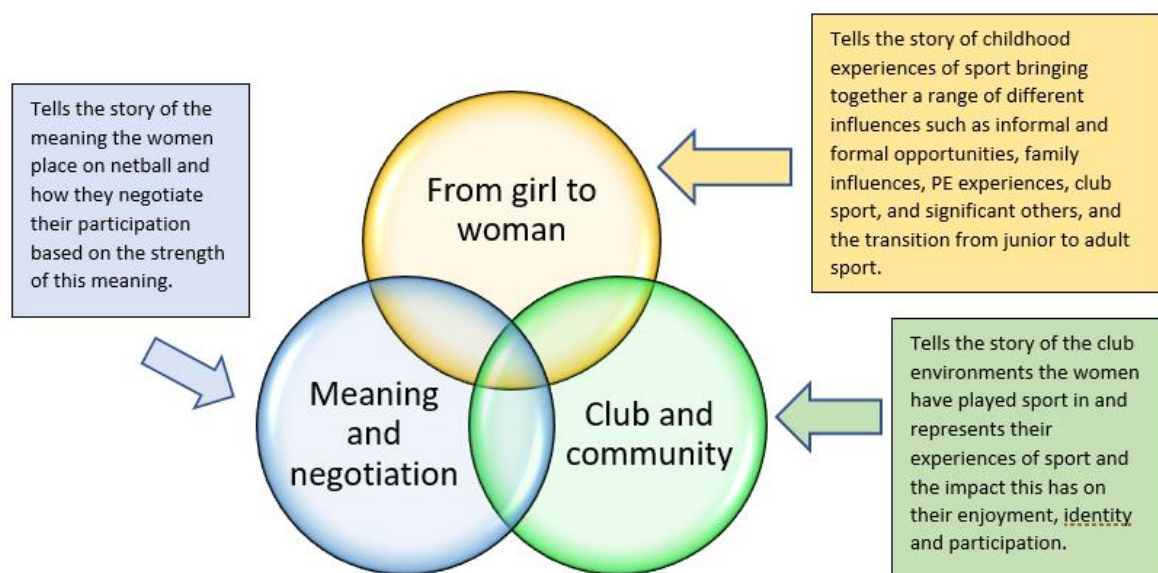


FIGURE 6.1 THEMES OF THE DATA

This theme (as illustrated in Figure 6.2) captures the multifaceted nature of childhood influences, such as the structure of the families the women grew up in, the resources of each family and how these were distributed, as well as the types of parental encouragement and the varying levels of parental support provided. As part of this theme the sporting experiences of the parents are also considered, as well as the types of activities the family engaged in together, including the influence of siblings and the concept of sibling rivalry.

This theme also reflects on the wider role of school PE in the women's sport socialisation and the transition from school to club netball.

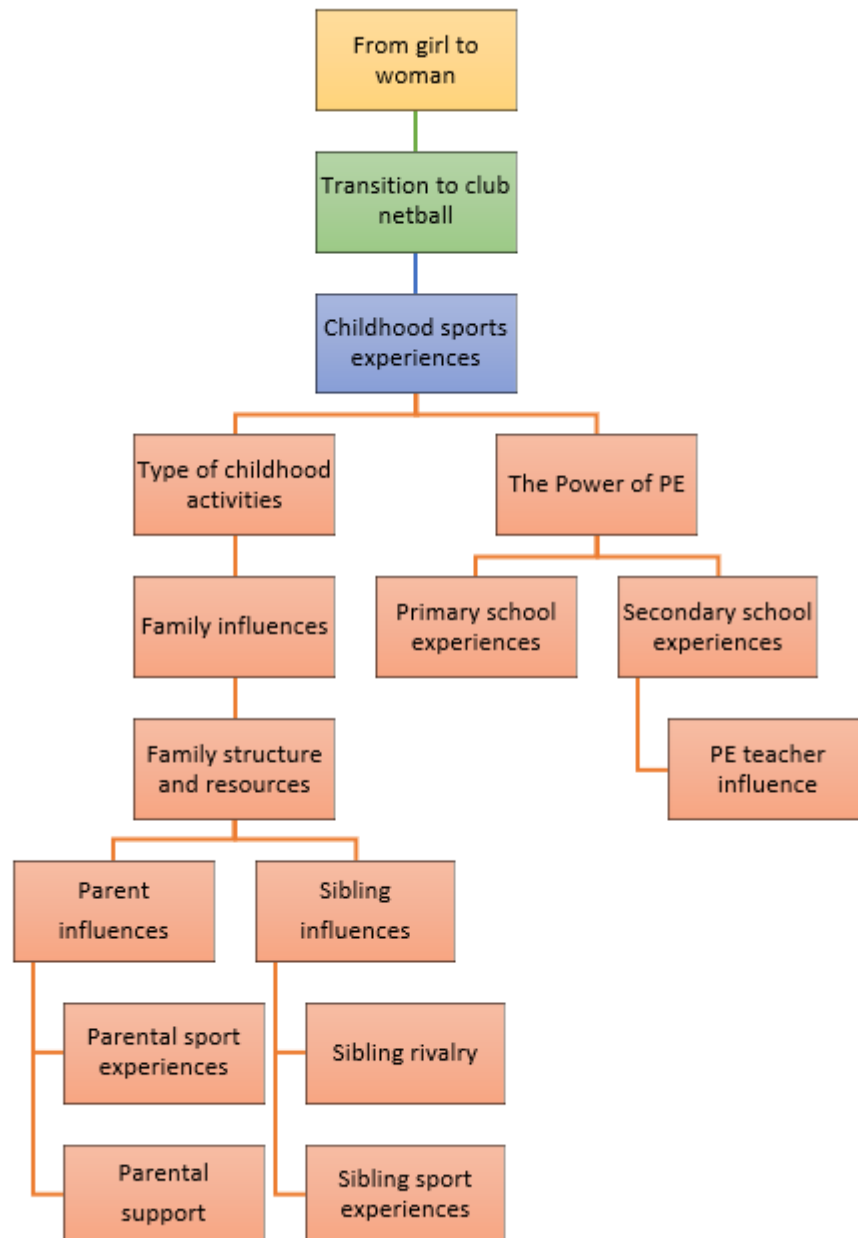


FIGURE 6.2 THEMATIC MAP OF 'FROM GIRL TO WOMAN'

Despite being quite close in terms of social class, whilst there are some broad themes and commonalities between the research participants there are also some important nuances and differences between them. This highlights that the process of socialisation is never uniform or entirely the same for each individual. Instead, socialisation is a complex process

experienced differently and uniquely by each of us, albeit within a broad framework identified by the key themes. To bring this to life where possible the women's stories are told in their own words drawing upon extracts from the women's interviews.

6.2 Family structure and resources

During the interviews, participants were asked to recall their childhood sports experiences and their family life growing up in general. What stood out for all nine women was their description of an active childhood and for all participants this occurred in terms of structured and organised sports activities, however, differences were evident between the more informal family activities engaged in as children. The abundance of research in Chapter 3 demonstrated that participation in physical activity is influenced by the home environment, social class and socioeconomic status. Of the nine women within this study eight grew up within two biological parent families, with just one of the participants experiencing life after the age of eleven in a single parent family, due to the death of her father. This resonates with previous studies that suggested living in single parent families may negatively influence a child's physical activity (e.g. Gorely et al., 2009; McMillan et al., 2016). This viewpoint is further supported by Lisa having to change the nature of her sports activities to accommodate the new single parent family structure (discussed further in Section 6.2.2). Furthermore, all participants had at least one sibling that they grew up with in the family home which has also been linked with greater levels of childhood physical activity (Bagley et al., 2006; Trent and Spitze, 2011). Therefore, it is likely that the families these women were brought up in, two biological parent families with siblings, may have positively influenced their physical activity participation.

While, as Chapter 5 demonstrates, all the women were ostensibly middle class, there were differences within the group where family resources and SES appeared to impact the types of activities the women engaged in as children. For example, Abbie, who was from one of the wealthier families, experienced family skiing holidays from around the age of 6 along with family activity holidays to Scotland and Wales, sampling different pursuits such as rock climbing, which fuelled her passion for adventure sports. Kerry's family appeared similarly affluent and were keen sailors and so sailing was a sport that she took part in with her parents and siblings from a young age and carried on throughout her childhood. In contrast,

both Rebecca and Hannah recalled money being a concern when they were younger and looking back at their childhood acknowledged what their parents must have sacrificed for their sport. Hannah was vehemently vocal in gratitude to her parents:

[...] my parents were so supportive they just wanted us to do everything. That's why I've always been eternally grateful to my parents really because they had 3 girls that all wanted to dance, all wanted to swim, all wanted to do this and that. The amount of times my parents probably remortgaged their house to make sure that we could do those things...fortunately I didn't have to pay, but I know it [swimming] was expensive for parents. I look back now and if they said 'you have to pay all that'...

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Rebecca's parents created the opportunity for her to attend the local swim club as a child, though, her participation was mediated by her family situation:

...there was no money in our family, like my mum and dad had no money between them, their families had no money, so dad was the only one of his siblings who went to work. So he worked from as soon as he was old enough, and his motivation was always to be able to provide for the family. So he said he would do whatever he could to make sure that we had what we needed. He was working nights, he was working weekends, he just said like 'that's what I need to do'. So he said, like he was working the night shift he didn't finish til seven so there was no way he could take us to morning training, if he was working during the day he was working from 7 til 7 most of the time sort of Monday to Friday and then working 7-12 or 7-1 on a Saturday. He just said that he physically couldn't do it.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

SES has been identified as a critical factor in sports participation for children (Dagkas and Stathi, 2007) and research by Cheval et al. (2018) linked lower SES in childhood to increased risk of physical inactivity for women in adulthood. However, this does not appear to be the case for Hannah and Rebecca where, although resources were limited, they maintained an active childhood which has continued into adulthood. This study provides some support for findings by Green et al. (2005) which identified that middle-class parents are more likely to

have resources or economic capital to help their children to participate in sport, but extends these findings further. Data shows that parents within this strata, who may have limited economic capital, overcome this by making sacrifices to ensure they are able to provide their children with the opportunity to participate in sport. Some parents may have low economic capital but high social capital in terms of sport from their own experiences or greater cultural capital that they pass on to their children. These all serve to contribute towards the formation of a child's sporting habitus, which is the product of a complex mix of different forms of capital. The priority that parents place on sport may dictate this distribution of available economic, social and cultural capital, which supports the view that children are more likely to participate in sport if their childhood is spent in a home whereby sport is valued.

6.2.1 Parental influences

Many of the participants recounted how their parents actively encouraged them to play outside and be physically active during their childhood, aligning with the proposal by Haycock and Smith (2014) that parental style and the nature of how the family spends their leisure time impacts upon sports participation. As well as participating in many outdoor adventure activities with her family, even when at home Abbie and her sister were always encouraged to be outdoors:

We weren't allowed to watch TV during the day if it wasn't raining outside or anything like that so we had to play outside and we lived down a really nice cul-de-sac so we were encouraged to play out with all the next-door neighbours and things like that so [...] We backed on to a field and I had neighbours on my right hand side and left hand side that were the same age as me, um we'd set up cricket posts, rounders posts and there was a football field there so we were constantly outside climbing trees or playing games and things like that so yeah I loved it.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Emma's story is similar to Abbie's in that her sport involvement growing up largely revolved around informal activities with her older siblings, although Emma has a larger family and is the youngest of six children:

[...]most of my time outside of school we were kicked out to the field to do sort of sport and my brothers all played rugby, football, cricket and so we used to, do you know what I mean, that was every day for us. We usually go down to the field and normally get given an oversized pair of football gloves and get shoved in the goal and they would just whack the ball at you as hard as they can and that was like my life!

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Large family size seems to reflect greater informal physical activity, and coming from a family with four brothers, informal activity featured heavily throughout Kerry's childhood:

we used to play some crazy games like loads of hide and seek and we had... mum used to let us do things that would really annoy me now – we used to have string and we'd just tie the house up like a giant spiders web and we'd just go and make assault courses and all crazy stuff like that so yeah...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

In contrast, although Hannah had two sisters, she struggled to recollect informal play as she felt that most of her time as a child was taken up with more structured events such as swimming galas and dance competitions, with very few weekends or evenings for free time or spare money to pay for treats. For other participants like Sam and Isabella, even when family sports activities were less prevalent, physical activity still featured as part of childhood through leisure time being spent walking in the woods and generally being outdoors, but with little sibling interaction. Parental encouragement of physical activity was reported as influential by eight out of nine of the participants. For Lisa, it was friends who were more influential in her desire to be physically active:

I was five years old and I was outside my house and I saw this girl doing gymnastics. She was doing headstands and handstands and I remember it as clear as anything, and I said I want a go at that. So I had a go and it came quite naturally so I said to my mum 'can I go and do gymnastics?

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Although Lisa's family were not sporty in any way, Lisa remained active throughout her childhood. Later in her childhood Lisa began horse-riding, and this decision was heavily influenced by the location of a stables within close proximity to home. This supports evidence, reported by Eime et al. (2017), that activities are not only influenced by the social environment generated by the family but also the physical environment. Further examples of this include Abbie who described living in a cul-de-sac backing on to a field where she frequently played, Kerry who had easy access to sailing due to location, and Emma who lived close to a playing field where she played sport with her siblings. Even Sam and Isabella having access to a woods or outdoor spaces to walk in contributed to the type of activities they engaged in during childhood.

6.2.2 Type of childhood activities

Informal sports activities with their family and siblings featured for five of the women in their narratives, with six of the women participating in organised extra-curricular sport at a young age. Anna remembered dancing from the age of three and swimming from a young age, similarly Hannah and Rebecca participated in ballet, tap and modern, as well as competing in swimming. Rebecca also took part in gymnastics as did Lisa and Sam, with Sam also starting athletics around the age of 10. Abbie played football and Kerry sailed and, although Isabella felt she was '*sporty*', organised sport did not particularly feature in her younger years, instead her engagement in formal sport began at secondary school through cross country and netball. As a young child, other than informal activities with her siblings, primary school netball was Emma's only activity. Through a combination of both formal and informal activities all nine of the women developed their physical capital, with those participating in formal clubs also developing their cultural and social capital through their interactions with others at an individual, institutional and societal level.

The formal childhood activities the women engaged in replicated findings by Wheeler (2012) that girls typically participate in traditional feminine activities such as dance or gymnastics. Though, this did not apply to all the women and Abbie rejected the gender-stereotyped choices she was offered:

in my primary school I actually played football and played football outside of school.

They didn't ever do any netball at all at my primary school. I think they did 5-a-side

and that started the year after I'd left primary school so it was quite old fashioned. And it was actually me and one other friend from primary school were the only two girls that joined the boys football team as that was the only option at the time. Girls were kind of sent to gymnastics.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Throughout their childhood, whether via school, informal play or structured activities all nine women in the study described participating in a range of sports activities.

I remember trying so many. I remember trying trampolining once, and I remember my dad wasn't happy he didn't like the whole idea of jumping around and landing on my neck so the day I said 'I'm not really into it' he's like 'right ok that's fine'

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Sampling of sports at an early age that are fun and enjoyable, advocates greater positive experiences and increased developmental outcomes, increasing the likelihood of lifelong involvement in sport (Côté et al., 2011). This applies to all the women in this study who sampled a range of activities, both formal and informal, throughout their childhood and continue their sports involvement into adulthood. Even the three women who participated in swimming, a sport renowned for early specialisation, also sampled a range of other activities. Through the lens of Bourdieu, sampling multiple activities requires moving in multiple fields, gaining social capital, alongside forms of cultural capital, particularly in the embodied state through their physical development.

6.2.3 Parental sports experiences

Connections between parental sport involvement and child physical activity are evident within the literature with several studies reporting that both mothers and fathers are shown to influence their daughter's participation (e.g. Dixon et al., 2008; Milošević and Vesković, 2013; Sukys et al., 2014). Seven of the nine participants in this study had at least one parent who had previously been involved in sport, though, the extent of this and the length of participation differed greatly. Some of the participants had parents who were both very

active during their childhood and remain active. For example, Abbie comes from a very active family with grandparents and cousins all involved in sport:

Well my mum played netball. She used to play quite a high level, I'm not sure how high but I remember going and watching her and sitting on the side-lines and thinking 'oh wow that's amazing'. And I always wanted to play when I was a lot younger but she actually stopped when I was maybe 5 or 6. Just purely because her commitments moved from netball to us children and keeping us occupied at the weekends and things like that. I think we got to an age, my sister and I, where we needed a bit more entertaining rather than being brought along in a buggy. And my dad was still playing a lot of squash. So my dad was still at squash and my mum gave up her netball. And she said she couldn't jump anymore because it made her pee her pants! [laughter] She was quite happy to give up!

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Abbie's dad now plays tennis instead of squash and although Abbie's mum stopped more structured sport, she has remained active through engaging in family activities and attending the gym and fitness classes. Kerry appears to have experienced a similar family background to Abbie with both parents active throughout her childhood through sailing and both parents remaining active. Kerry's dad continues to sail as well as run, and her mum now participates in exercise like swimming and yoga. This resonates with research conducted in a similar time period to when the women were growing up such as studies by Bond and Batey (2005) and Horne et al. (2005) that suggested women engage in activities that accommodate the family. Only Kerry and Abbie had active mothers during their childhood, showing potential links between physical activity participation and SES, replicating findings by Brown et al. (2001) that those women with greater SES are more likely to stay active, which in Brown's study was attributed to greater social support.

Paternal influence featured in Emma and Hannah's narratives as they described their fathers' interest and previous sport involvement, supporting evidence by Milošević and Vesković (2013) that for some children fathers were involved more in the children's sports activities compared to mothers. Emma's dad, initially a gifted footballer, later turned to

running and cycling and it is his sport involvement that appeared to have had a big impact on Emma:

My dad, yeah so when we used to go for day trips and stuff we'd all pile in the car and go and he'd get up at like 5 in the morning and cycle to wherever we were going like he'd cycle to the coast and meet us there. So yeah it was massive, sport, and like being outside is massively kind of impacted on me I guess. It's always been the case and my brothers now they all cycle, they all kind of run ...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Hannah recalled her dad being active during her childhood, playing squash and darts, and remembered watching him play squash at the local leisure centre. Other parents were active prior to having children but the women had no recollection of them being active during their childhood. Emma knew that her mum played netball and tennis but had withdrawn by the time she was born and did not re-engage. In contrast, Lisa and Hannah's mums were never sporty. Rebecca also described her parents as both active when they were younger, her dad playing football and her mum Highland Dancing, but neither of them had engaged in sport since having a family, other than her mum attending a weekly exercise class. Isabella talked of her dad being a fast runner and her mum liking netball during her youth, but she had no recollection of them participating in sport. Anna's dad played cricket, football and squash but after moving to a new city and starting a family ceased to continue. Sam knew her dad used to play rugby before she was born, and her mum played a bit of netball at school, but neither had been active and sporty during Sam's lifetime. Lisa's experience once again differs from the others as neither parents had any involvement in sport at all. The women's accounts of parental activity supports research spanning over two decades that documents how major life events can negatively impact female sports participation (e.g. Bittman and Wajcman, 2000; Sayer, 2005; Bellows-Riecken and Rhodes, 2008; Sayer, 2016) but also illustrates that it is not only women who cease playing sport when starting a family or during life transitions, but that becoming a father can also cause men to withdraw from sport. Similar to findings by Lim et al. (2011) family commitments appeared to impact both male and female sports participation for the women's parents.

The findings presented here demonstrate that, whilst parental participation in sport is a

factor in a child's sport participation, the degree of influence varies from family to family. Two participants were influenced by both parents being active, two mainly by their father, four had never seen their parents active although they knew they were active when they were younger, and one had parents who had never been active. Those parents who had not engaged in sport themselves still provided support for their children to be active. This suggests that although parental involvement in sport can have a positive influence on female sport involvement, it is not essential, and that the parental support offered is of greater importance. This resonates with the findings by Dixon et al. (2008) that mothers wanted their daughters to have the sports experiences that were not available to them when they were younger, or were not allowed to have, and so were conscious to communicate to their daughters that sports participation was good. However, further to Dixon's research, this study also provides evidence that prior involvement in sport may allow for intergenerational transfer of cultural capital through parental support and knowledge of sport, and perhaps even genetically through cultural capital in the embodied state.

6.2.4 Parental support

The sports experiences of the women's parents were varied in terms of involvement and continued engagement, however, a strong commonality is the value that the parents placed on sport and the support they have offered the participants throughout their childhood and even into adulthood. Parents are significant in the distribution of economic, social and cultural resources for their children (Wheeler and Green, 2014). The varying ways that parents distributed such capital is shown by many of the participants who talked about parents being like a taxi service:

Every night my dad was taxi man taking us here and there and everywhere. If it wasn't swimming ... like some nights ... like Thursday I'd do athletics followed by swimming, my brother would play football every Saturday morning, and train one night a week. I'd have school fixtures...

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

When I was younger it was quite a struggle to fit everything in because my parents were literally running me all over the place. I was doing ballet, tap and modern to

quite a high level, I was swimming and competing at sort of national standard and I was playing netball so mum and dad were like pulling their hair out as to where to take me...

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

... like it was never a chore for someone to come and pick us up[...] whereas my parents were always the ones to come and pick me and my friends up...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

...my mum and dad were the ones who took me to training, every weekend we would pretty much be away with cross country at like 13 and 14 [...] they would come everywhere with me ...

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

Isabella told a slightly different story with regard to her parents who were supportive, but not in the unconditional way that some of the other parents in the study seemed to be:

... they weren't the type of parents who would drop everything to help their child achieve their dreams or anything. Like it was a massive massive deal for them to take me down to county netball and we used to make sure the lifts were all shared with the other two girls... that was like a big thing for them [...] But yeah they did make sure that I could do county netball [...] a niece of mine is doing swimming and they were seeing if she was good enough to get into the England team and they were like at Sheffield every weekend and stuff, my parents would never have done anything like that...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Lisa also described a different style of support due to her dad passing away when she was 11 and her mum, who ran a business by herself, becoming a single parent, altering the family structure and resources. This sudden change in family circumstances, and the impact on the economic capital available, alongside the increased commitment required for Lisa to compete at a higher level in gymnastics, resulted in Lisa's mum being unable to provide the

level of support required. Lisa was unable to pursue her gymnastics and stopped when she was 13. Although this would appear to align with research findings by McMillan et al. (2016) that proposed children residing in single parent families were less likely to participate in organised sport, Lisa did not withdraw from sport completely, but instead persuaded her mum to let her pursue horse-riding, which was more local and easily accessible. Although Lisa does not blame her mum for having to quit gymnastics, she did admit that this experience has impacted her own parenting, as she provides encouragement and support to her son and daughter in any way that she can. This is indicative once again of the mothers in Dixon et al.'s (2008) study who wanted to provide opportunities they feel they themselves were deprived of. Equally Isabella felt that her netball trajectory may have been different if she had received greater levels of support, which, like Lisa, is influential in her own parenting:

I tell my children do what you love, I'm not going to push you into doing something for money, and because you always end up wanting to do something in what you love and then you've more incentive to work harder if you really enjoy something.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

What emerges from these stories is that the two participants, Isabella and Lisa, whose parents did not play any sport in adulthood and had little interest in sport seemed, although still supportive, to place less value on, and perhaps allocate less economic, social and cultural capital to, providing sports opportunities and supporting sport for their children. Both Isabella and Lisa acknowledged that this has shaped their own parenting, adamant that that their own children are offered unconditional support to achieve their goals.

Gender differences also seemed to feature for some participants in the roles that each parent fulfilled in supporting their children. In Anna and Rebecca's case it would appear to be dad that provided the physical transport and mum who organised and oversaw the process:

She'd [mum] make sure like our bags were ready and kit was ready, like you're here, you're there, and dad's got to pick you up from there. She was like the organiser. That's how it all worked so she didn't lose a kid!"

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

In addition to the logistical support parents provided, the participants also referred to the emotional support offered. Anna felt such support has bestowed upon both her and her brother a work ethic that has infiltrated all areas of their lives. Abbie also recalled her parents making sure she remained committed:

There was probably times when it was chucking it down with rain when I thought 'I don't want to go this week' and they did say 'no come on you've got to go'

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Kerry's mum offered support in a slightly different way one summer holiday through buying her a ball specifically to practice her catching:

Mum went 'I've just realised you can't catch a ball!' [Laughter] because she also taught at my school and then bought me a netball and then over the summer holidays I basically just practiced every day and then I could catch a ball a bit.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Emotional support appeared most prevalent when participants were injured or considering withdrawal. For example, Rebecca described having the difficult conversation with her dad when she wanted to give up swimming:

I told my dad I didn't want to swim anymore. Ahhh, that went down like a lead balloon! Because he kept going 'you're so talented. You don't know what you've got. You're wasting it away'. But I said 'yeah but if I wanted to do it then I'd be motivated to do it' and I just lost all motivation.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Emma talked of her parents' support throughout her childhood with her hip problem and then later her mum's support throughout her injury:

my mum's brilliant at all that so my mum came and um yeah she was kicking off and stuff and trying to get someone to pay attention and in the end it got to the point where I just stopped going to the hospital and just went to my GP and it was a physio that recognised it [...] And then that was it off to specialist and my mum went and

kicked off again and she obviously bigs everything up and she was like 'she was playing like county level' I hadn't played county for years and she was like 'she played county level she could have been going all the way' and he pushed it all through...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

In complete contrast Abbie's parents showed support in a very unusual way - by not going to watch her play sport:

I have always been quite shy and I never wanted my mum to watch me. So I think she watched me play at school a couple of times my mum, but other than that no one's ever come and watched me or come to support me. I'd just rather go and enjoy it on my own.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

The parental support articulated by the women comprises many common elements, such as financial contributions and transporting their children, although each account also held elements unique to the individual. The common features of parental support were typically evident in the provision of financial and logistical contributions, although fluctuations between families were evident, however, it appeared that the emotional support provided showed greater variation, often unique to each individual. For example, coping with injury, encouraging commitment, providing opportunities, supporting withdrawal and even by listening to the child's wishes and not spectating. The distribution of economic, social and cultural capital appeared essential in ensuring the women were provided with both the opportunities to engage in sport and also to maintain that engagement throughout their childhood. The provision of support and the distribution of such capital is also mediated by sibling influences.

6.3 Sibling influence

All nine participants had siblings that lived at home with them during childhood and, for six of the participants, siblings featured strongly in their narratives, reinforcing the conclusion by Blazo and Smith (2018) that having more siblings will mostly positive associate with time

spent on sport participation or physical activity. Replicating findings by Lundy et al. (2019), siblings were identified as playmates for informal activities and as role models and providers of opportunity to experience more formal sports pursuits. Emma's first taste of netball arose as a result of her sister's participation:

I was really lucky in primary school because my sister was obviously 18 months older than me [...] and I used to have to sit and wait for her to finish when she started because you don't start playing until year 5 do you? So she was in year 5 and I was in year 3 and my favourite teacher in the world was just like 'oh there's no point you just sitting there we're short of a player come and play' and that was how it all started for me. And I stayed in...I was just put in the team in year 3 and it was just like 'yeah come and play games with us' and it was just like literally that was the trigger for me I just loved it! And I was so short and none of the kit fitted me – they put me in this tracksuit and I was like rolling it up and stuff.

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Rebecca encountered a similar experience where she played for her older sister's hockey team:

if they were short they would ask me to play because if [my sister] was there it was easy for me to go. And so I ended up playing up. I remember being in year 8 playing in their year 11 team...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Through their older siblings both Emma and Rebecca were socialised into different sports and teams that perhaps they would not typically have had access to, learning from them, competing against them, and being supported by them as well. Once again drawing parallels with the study by Lundy et al. (2019) where younger siblings benefitted from the exposure to their older sibling's sport experiences. It is likely that younger siblings may develop their cultural and social capital at a more advanced rate due to their exposure to different fields via their siblings, which provides further explanation to the sporting success of later born children reported by Hopwood et al. (2015).

Kerry engaged in a more unusual family pastime where the whole family sailed competitively, however, her brothers also participated in a range of other sports, like windsurfing and skating, but Kerry did not. This suggests further support for a gendered influence on sports participation as identified by Osai and Whiteman (2017) whereby the influence of siblings only occurs in siblings of the same gender. Anna and Hannah also had very active siblings with Anna's younger brother playing football, rugby and cricket, and Hannah's sisters participating in a range of activities from dance, cross country and swimming. In addition, Anna, Hannah and Rebecca and their siblings all swam for a club from an early age, with all three participants competing at higher levels than their siblings. Rebecca described how, although initially she struggled with swimming once joining a club, she began to outperform her older sister:

She used to be quite cross with me, like because I was so good but I didn't really have the right attitude. I could get in the pool and swim really fast and just get out of the pool and be like 'yeah that was alright'. Whereas she tried really hard and just couldn't do it. So she used to get frustrated that she was trying hard and not getting anywhere where I would just swim up and paddle a bit and do better than she did. I think she kind of learnt to accept it and when I went to the swim twenty one [national talent programme] she was like 'ok maybe she is quite good'

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Spectating their sibling's sports also featured in some of the women's childhoods. Rebecca used to watch her sister play football and Anna described having to watch her brother play football because she was not old enough to stay at home on her own. At the age of 13, Emma also recalled getting paid for scoring the cricket for her brothers' team. Neither Emma nor Anna adopted the sport of their male sibling but their experiences of their brother's sport environments may have influenced their own desire to be involved in sport, providing support for evidence from Davison (2004) that girls can be influenced by their male siblings. Abbie and her sister have always been sporty but rarely participated in the same sports, with Abbie preferring team sports and her sister opting for more individual activities. Abbie recalled her sister playing competitive netball for a brief period:

... when I started playing in the ladies league maybe when I was about 14 or 15 she kind of thought 'oh I wanna do that'. She's about 2 foot taller than me so thought 'oh

I'll be better than Abbie' and she always used to play at school and was in the school netball team but never played outside of school... she came along and played about 2 or 3 matches and she's really competitive um and she just used to get too angry so she said it wasn't for her as she was getting frustrated with herself for not getting to the ball.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Emma, Hannah, Rebecca, and Kerry and Abbie were exposed to different sports environments through either participating with, or watching, a sibling play sport, and this was typically the older sibling(s), except for Anna who was the eldest. This reinforces that the older siblings act as role models and socialising agents, although differences seem to occur with gender, with the women not necessarily taking up the same sports as their male siblings. Anna did not take up football like her brother, but they did both swim competitively. In contrast, neither Lisa, Sam nor Isabella had siblings that influenced their sports participation in any way. Sam's sisters were much older than her and neither were sporty. Lisa's sister was not interested in sport at all and Isabella's younger sister, although quite good at swimming, never chose to pursue this in her own time. Isabella remembered being jealous of her sister's height:

She's quite a lot taller than me so I was always really jealous. I was like 'I need those feet, why do you get them when you don't want to play netball!'

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

The three women with non-sporty siblings typically grew up in the households where the parents were the least active. Neither Lisa nor Isabella's parents were sporty themselves or placed much emphasis on sport. Sam's parents played sport when they were younger but were not active during her childhood. These findings indicate that sporty and non-sporty children can be raised within the same household. Typically, research around the time period of the women's youth linked discrepancies in sibling participation to gender (e.g. Eccles et al., 1993; Fredricks and Eccles, 2005; Gustafson and Rhodes, 2006) which showed that boys tended to be more active and received more parental support, yet, such gender differences do not appear evident from any of the women's narratives. This suggests that in

those families with different gender siblings, the parents ensured that their daughters had the equal support to be active than their sons, and for those families with only female siblings those that wanted to be active were encouraged and supported. The presence of siblings could potentially have a negative impact on the distribution of economic capital (as the more siblings the less financial support per child), though, in this study siblings appeared to enhance social capital, through expanding the women's social networks and enhancing relationships with people they would not otherwise have met. Siblings were also instrumental in the development of the women's cultural capital, in particular physical capital, through enhanced opportunities to be active and the need to keep up and compete with their siblings.

6.3.1 Sibling competition and rivalry

Growing up with siblings often gives rise to a certain amount of competitiveness and rivalry and five of the women discussed the role this played throughout their childhood:

I don't know if it's having loads of brothers or something but whenever we used to just do a family walk there would be a competition about who could find the longest stick or all that sort of thing. So, competition has been part of my life since I was tiny...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Rebecca claimed her sister's swimming "*wasn't quite as good as me!*" and Emma described her own experience of childhood sibling competition as "*super competitive*" but also "*really protective*". This is explained by her role in the family cricket game:

I'd be like 'I wanna bowl' and you could see... like you could see them roll their eyes they'd be like 'oh no' but they'd be like 'oh yeah yeah you bowl then' and it's like you could see ... the hate like 'oh god we're never gonna get this person out because she's bowling'

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Sibling relationships are typically one of the longest relationships a person has throughout their lives and sibling influence does not end in childhood. Emma, Kerry and Anna all

discussed how their siblings remain a large part of their life into adulthood. For instance, Emma's brother and sister have involved her in a running challenge to be uploaded onto an app where they can comment on one another's times:

He [brother] refuses to like it because it's like 'you ran 8.03 min miles?' and even though I started at 9 min miles he's like 'you can get that under 8 mins that's just weak' [laughter] so yeah there is like... so it's a constant challenge, and I have got it under 8 minutes, and it does kind of trigger something in you like 'I think I can actually run a bit faster' so yeah

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Kerry and her eldest brother still compare their running times now on Garmin¹. Similarly, Anna and her brother also remain competitive:

...there was one run we did and he joined us for the last seven miles and he hadn't trained, he hadn't been properly training and he did it like that!

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Throughout the study, from both interviews and ethnographic data, it is evident to see that all nine participants are competitive in their own way, whether this is as a team, developing their own performance, or setting themselves life goals to achieve. The habitus formed through childhood, which forms an unconscious basis for their behaviour, thoughts and emotions, reinforces the suggestion by Stuij (2015) that it is shaped by exposure to sibling rivalry and the presence of siblings. The data presented shows that the transference of cultural capital would appear to be enhanced through sibling rivalry and competition. For some of the women their shared experiences of sport with their siblings occurred via school sport.

6.4 The power of PE

Alongside family influences children are also socialised into sport and physical activity through PE in school. Some studies show little or no evidence that PE has an impact on

¹ Garmin is an brand of activity tracker which collects data on your physical activity which you can analyse and share with others.

regular levels of physical activity (Green, 2014), however, Engström (2008) proposed that, as well as leisure pursuits, a child's sporting activities undertaken at school form part of an individual's habitus towards sport. What stands out in this study is that although many of the women took part in different activities outside of school, all nine participants experienced their first encounter of playing netball during primary or secondary school.

6.4.1 Primary school

Six of the women remember participating in some form of netball at primary school, but their memories of this differ greatly. Hannah recalled playing a lot of netball at primary school, which she found valuable on her transition to secondary school. Rebecca, Lisa and Sam also articulated clear memories of playing netball at primary school, Kerry had a vague recollection and as previously discussed Emma played for her older sister's year. Abbie, Anna and Isabella's experiences were very different as they did not play any netball at primary school. Isabella remembered being disappointed at being denied the opportunity:

So when I was at primary school they didn't do any netball, they once had a netball team picked to go up to secondary school to play and I didn't get picked, I was really really grumpy...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

PE at primary school socialised six of the women into netball, but it was not a key focus of their activities during young childhood, with extracurricular activities taking priority. Nevertheless, for those six women PE experiences provided the foundations to develop their physical capital in relation to the sport of netball.

6.4.2 Secondary school

Eight of the nine women played netball throughout secondary school to varying levels except for Rebecca who, due to lack of a netball team, played hockey instead. Kerry remembered playing netball but not frequently, Lisa played throughout secondary school and Sam played and captained the team. Anna, Emma, Hannah, and Isabella were selected by their PE teachers to trial for county netball and were all successful. However, Anna, who was still swimming at this stage, found the commitment to two sports too much and withdrew from county netball after only a few sessions, as she preferred swimming.

Isabella's experience of county netball was also far from positive:

The county Coach never liked me and I never got picked and I got really put off for ages after that – these are really traumatic memories!

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

All of the women mentioned their PE teacher as playing a part in their sports involvement:

I was lucky as the PE teacher that I think was brilliant she [sister] doesn't like as a PE teacher because she [sister] said 'she's got her favourites' and I was probably lucky because I was one of her favourites!

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

My PE teacher um influenced me a lot in school, not just for netball, to become a PE teacher actually, well initially anyway...

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

I think I grew up and grew into sport. And always played at school and the teachers saw something in me to ask me to play for the teams and stuff so ...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

None of the participants reported negative experiences of school PE. Many of the women had supportive parents and opportunities outside of school as well as supportive and influential PE teachers. This relates to the suggestion by Brown (2005) that success at PE encourages the individual to seek out and gain access to sport in the future and supports research by Kjønnsen et al. (2009) that found both positive attitudes to PE and participation in organised youth sports significantly relate to physical activity in adulthood. The data within this study also provides further evidence to support the view of Stuij (2015) that supplementation of PE with regular formal youth sports (typically of children with higher SES) is more likely to facilitate a habitus of regular sport and exercise through adult sports club memberships, as opposed to those children who only engage in informal activities and PE. For some of the women in this study, the transition to adult sport occurred during their school years.

6.4.3 Transition to club netball

The women provide varying accounts of their transition from school to club netball with some playing for clubs whilst still at secondary school and others transitioning much later in life. Emma recalled that her secondary school did not have a sixth form team and at this stage she was not aware of women's netball. This lack of knowledge, even though she had played Under 16 County netball, prevented her from playing until a chance meeting with a friend's mum who introduced her to women's netball. Equally, Lisa ceased playing upon leaving school, also unaware of adult netball in the local area until chatting to friends years later who also played netball and invited her to join them. Likewise, chance social connections featured in Sam's story, as a lady in her village knew Sam played netball at school and invited her along to train with her club. All three women were, therefore, only involved in adult netball due to lack of other women providing information and encouragement, highlighting the importance of social capital in enhancing sports opportunities and participation. With a much greater presence of grassroots netball on social media and the campaigns by England Netball it is likely that women and girls today are more informed, yet, there may still be certain demographics of women that are unaware that netball remains a viable option for physical activity into adulthood.

For Abbie and Hannah, their school netball provided the catalyst and steppingstone into the world of club netball, facilitated by the social and cultural capital of their secondary school PE teachers:

She [PE teacher] said 'I can see you're sporty and you enjoy it and you like the team game' and she was really good at kind of putting me in touch with a couple of people and said she'd send her daughter with me. Her daughter was a few years older than me but knew a few of the people down there so she kind of pulled me along with her which was really good. Yeah so I guess as a PE teacher its part of her job to encourage people to take part outside of school.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

...our PE teacher, was really really good at kind of getting you into things and having those links so yeah I think I got in via school really.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Isabella's transition into club netball also occurred via school, although by a slightly different route, beginning in a junior club team rather than adults:

when I was 11 I'd just gone to secondary school and there was a scheme in the city that was called 'Champion Coaching' and it was run by [3 coaches] and they had lots of children, girls from year 7 and they picked from to take... and I was picked from that and from then on I've always played. So I've played since I was 11. I used to go to a like a youth team they used to run...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

All of the women, with the exception of Rebecca, were engaged in school netball until they were 16. Of the six that continued to sixth form Abbie, Anna, Hannah and Kerry continued their school netball involvement, with Abbie and Hannah also playing club netball alongside this. With no teams at their schools Emma and Rebecca did not play during sixth form, but Emma played for an adult club during this time and Rebecca participated in other school sports. Isabella admitted that she rebelled between the ages of 16-18 and withdrew from all sport during her sixth form years. Upon leaving school, Sam attended the local FE college, where she joined the college team in addition to playing club netball, and when Lisa left school at 16 with it ended all sport activity. The women's accounts of remaining engaged in school sport and club netball during their late teenage years meant that they all, with the exception of Lisa and Isabella, remained physically active and immune to the typically high attrition rates in females reported during adolescence (Wetton et al., 2013). Remaining engaged within a team sport also contrasts with findings by Eime et al. (2013b) that girls aged 16–18 move their participation away from organised, competitive forms of activity to less structured and non-competitive individual forms of physical activity. Yet, Lisa and Isabella did disengage for a period. Overall, the participation behaviour of the women provides evidence of the durable habitus developed throughout their childhood which has impacted their practice in the continued engagement of team sports, even for the two women who temporarily disengaged.

6.5 Chapter conclusion

The childhood sports experiences of all nine women present both variations and similarities. Active childhoods were consistent, providing evidence to suggest the development of a habitus towards sport participation throughout childhood, however, the nature of their socialisation and experiences varied, with differing combinations and types of informal play and formal extracurricular sport clubs. In all instances parents held the power to distribute economic, social and cultural capital to provide and support sporting opportunities, but, differences between familial resources were evident. All nine women grew up in households with siblings and identified comparable features of the sibling relationships, though, the diverse nature of sibling relations and interactions elicited variations in the impact on the women's socialisation and experiences of sport. Physical Education presents another common experience, in particular the women's introduction to netball, however, PE played a more significant role for some, namely in the selection for county netball trials and the transition between school and club sport.

The journey has been significantly different for each individual, yet they have all reached the same destination of playing for Uptown as adults: but there is no singular pathway. The findings here demonstrate that adult participation in sport is not reducible to simple, linear, one dimensional childhood experiences that are traceable to a few key influences. Instead, understanding the consequences of childhood experiences and the formation of the habitus on adult participation in sport is a complex picture infused with different layers of influence and intra-family relationships. It is a series of connections and interactions occurring in multiple fields. In the next chapter we look at how these childhood experiences influence the meaning that netball has for the participants and how this shapes their negotiation to participate.

Chapter 7: Negotiating netball: meaning and attachment

7.1 Introduction

The findings from Chapter 6 demonstrate that the paths the women followed from childhood to adult sport were not identical or clear-cut, nor did they follow a linear progression. Instead, they were comprised of multiple layers of influences through a variety of familial relationships and resources, as well as childhood experiences of extracurricular sport and PE. Evidence suggests that during their childhood the women developed a habitus towards sport participation, and this chapter provides the next instalment in the story of the data, by exploring the impact of the women's habitus on their adult participation. Habitus is not something that can be measured but instead is reflected in the practices people engage in within distinct social fields (Alanen et al., 2015). Netball means a lot to these women and the roots of this attachment can be traced back to childhood experiences, it forms a durable part of their habitus. This durability of habitus generates a commitment to the sport which results in an investment of their energy in negotiating their participation. Even in situations where giving up their participation would be easier the durability of their habitus provides the drive to negotiate any constraints to maintain their involvement. Therefore, this chapter explores the meaning the women place on netball and how they negotiate their participation based on the strength of this meaning. Figure 7.1 shows this top-level theme of meaning and negotiation alongside the sub-themes which are explored in more detail throughout the chapter.

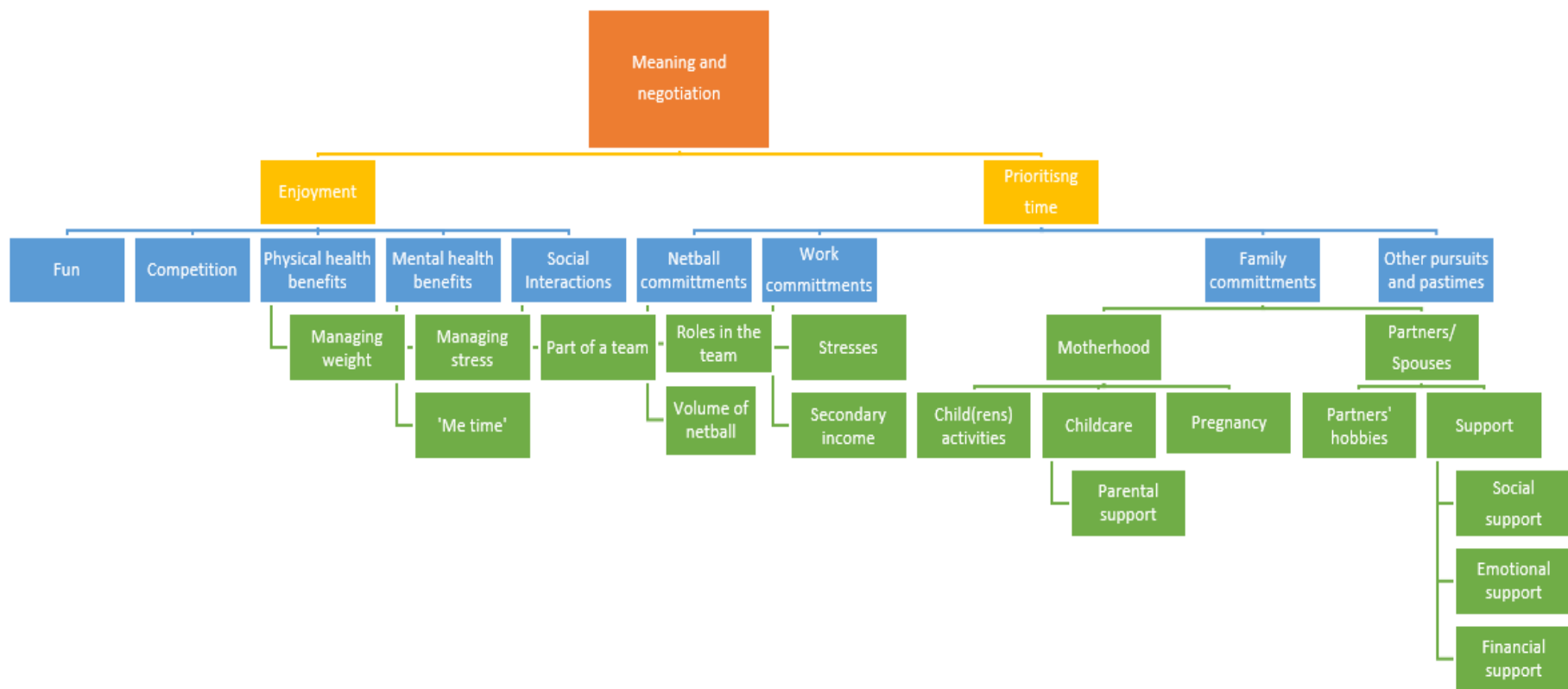


FIGURE 7.1 THEMATIC MAP OF 'MEANING AND NEGOTIATION'

The nine women within this study have continued their netball participation despite all leading busy lives governed by a range of competing factors, overcoming unique constraints that can negatively impact the sports involvement of women and girls. For some, this involved working and raising a family, for others making time to spend with their partners, and for one player even making sure their dogs were not left alone for too long. Regardless of the specific lifestyle situation of each individual, their passion and drive to play netball meant that they were all presented with the same challenge: negotiating modern day life to provide the space and time to participate in their sport. The women are all occupying multiple fields and this chapter investigates the reality of negotiating time and the relative influences of habitus and capital. First of all the meaning the women associated with playing netball and what drives their continued participation is explored, before moving on to look at how the women managed their lifestyle to negotiate any constraints to participate in netball, what this participation looked like and the level of priority the women placed on netball.

7.2 Enjoyment and the meaning of netball

The attachment that individual's place on their sports practices is important in shaping their identities and belonging to a social group (Clément, 1995). All nine women cited enjoyment as a key factor in their participation, however, this term can hold various meanings and, therefore, looking deeper at the specific reasons the women play netball contributes to understanding their enjoyment. Within their narratives five participants specified the competitive element of sport as integral to this enjoyment factor:

I was running and I joined a gym but to me it's not the same as kind of running round on a netball court and you don't get that scoring a goal or winning or losing or that team kind of feeling. It's not the same when you just go for a run.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Because it's fun and I like winning! And I like that it's competitive, and like you have to think about what you're doing and you can't think about anything else.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

The competitive element of netball provided an additional layer of attraction and enjoyment that engaging in a workout or exercising was unable to replicate:

...even though I'm a PE teacher, believe it or not I'm not really into exercise. I don't like to just go and exercise. I like to be able to exercise but not have to think about it and do something fun at the same time. I guess that's kind of one of the reasons why I did it and now I don't want to not do it.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Enjoyment in its purest sense (i.e. pleasure, satisfaction, fun) was also achieved via the health benefits it afforded the women, and the satisfaction of being healthy featured strongly in the women's accounts:

I feel like it's good for you, it's a good mind-set and I like being physically active.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

...um keeping fit and mentally healthy because actually it helps me. I feel lethargic if I'm not doing sport and if I'm doing any sport I want to be doing netball because that's what I like doing.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

The health benefits gained from netball also presented links to maintaining healthy eating habits, with three of the participants; Hannah, Abbie and Lisa, all using netball to manage their weight:

I wanted to do a sport because I was putting on weight but I didn't know what I wanted to do and then it weren't til a friend said 'I play netball why don't you come' that I did it because I knew I was gonna love it because I'd played it at primary and secondary school so that was the reason.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

...because anyone that knows me knows that I'm a massive food person as well so I have to balance out the amount I eat with my exercise and obviously the exercise that I was doing was netball so not being able to do that I put on quite a bit of weight

when I had my knee op which was really frustrating. I know you're sat there thinking 'well stop eating then you silly cow' but it's not that easy is it?

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Emma also referred to her weight, but this appeared to be managed for her by the relationship with her sister, rather than specifically through netball:

So there's been times when I've got quite unfit and I've put a bit of weight on and stuff and she'll [sister] come down and is like 'right we're going out' and literally she runs you to the point of vomiting and if she hasn't she feels like she's failed! And she's just like 'this is how hard you should be running, every time you run you should be running this hard, if you're coming back and you feel like that was a nice lovely little stroll then you're doing it wrong!' So it's like ok!

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

These findings support research by Russell (2002) that netballers are significantly oriented towards their appearance, with physical appearance having a strong influence on overall body satisfaction. Despite this, all nine women were comfortable enough with their bodies and physical appearance to wear the club kit (short, tight fitting netball dresses), with none of them voicing a dislike of the kit or any distress in their physical appearance at netball, as discussed by Staurowsky (2016). This may be reflective of the women in this study, as none were significantly overweight, and their cultural capital, specifically the embodied state, aligned with the image of what a netballer should look like. Yet, some of the women used netball to manage their body weight and shape to conform to this image. The association between physical appearance and gender have also been linked to social class (Åberg et al., 2020), and this middle-class sample aligns with Bourdieu's concept of the body acting as a symbol of refined taste, and of physical and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). This refined physical appearance also encompasses the notion of femininity which Devonport et al. (2019) suggested provides an attraction to the sport of netball, though, this was not explicitly explored with the women in this study. All nine women in this study had appearances that conformed to the traditional feminine body image, yet, through ethnographic observations over the two seasons, certain opposition players were mocked

when they did not conform to this Uptown ideal, either through being too overweight, too aggressive or considered 'butch'.

Alongside physical factors, the implications for mental health also featured in the narratives of the women. A significant dimension of enjoyment and the gratification that netball provided, stated by all nine women, was the opportunity to relieve the stresses of everyday life, including work and family, to provide a balance in their lives and some time out from life to maintain their mental wellbeing:

I think it's a really good stress reliever because you play for 40 minutes and no one cares about whether you had a bad day at work or if you know you've just had an argument at home or whatever you go and you can let it out and concentrate on something different.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

It's kind of like my little world outside of my life. Um so when I'm at work and everything, obviously you're working, you've got your home life, when you're at netball none of that really comes into it you just come and you play and you try and win and it's kind of quite simple rather than overthinking everything else. I'm quite anxious outside of netball whereas when I'm in netball I feel like I'm in a bit more control so it's my little safety net.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Abbie felt she was less anxious at netball and enjoyed being her netball self. Identity is fluid and liquid both on a day-to-day basis and over longer periods of time, and individuals will hold different identities relevant to different contexts (Lundvall and Walseth, 2014). The type of capital one holds and the power or responsibility this leads to also varies from field to field and for some women, like Abbie, it can be the lack of power or responsibility that they have at netball which is appealing. For those participants who were mothers, the construction of enjoyment comprised an added layer, the provision of 'me time', a space where they were no longer 'mum':

I guess netball is my break away from everything else. Yes. All the other stuff that is going on. Cos I think especially since [daughter] came along you don't realise how much everything becomes about [daughter] and you have to sit there and sometimes you think oh god when did we last have a conversation that didn't involve like is [daughter]'s school uniform ironed or has [daughter] got her water bottle ready for the morning? [...] So yeah I guess for me it's kind of like my release it's my little break away from everything else and it's just fun!

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

it's my time away from the children and it's a good balance, you know a good mind balance as well because if you've had a stressful day it relieves all that. And you look forward to it ... you know I look forward to it again now.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

This escape of familial responsibility echoes the narratives of female surfers documented by Spowart et al. (2010), however, this study reveals potential differences in the needs of the women according to their life stage. Isabella explained that previously netball was a space where she could “be herself” but now she is older, and her children are older, this has changed slightly:

I used to feel like that was my me time, that was my escape from being a mum time. It was really important a few years back but it's not as much the case now because there's other things so yeah...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

The data support findings by O'Brien et al. (2017) that for each woman leisure time held its own meaning, and provided space to think and feel differently which, over time, enhanced their embodied and emotional well-being. Therefore, the construction of enjoyment for these women is multifaceted with ubiquitous dimensions including fun, competition, physical health, weight management and mental health benefits, such as relieving stress and time for themselves, with each individual demonstrating their own variation of enjoyment. Numerous studies researching women's well-being have reported maintaining

social relationships as an important constant factor (Horne et al., 2005) and social interaction of being part of a team was a constant that connected all the women. Even though socialising with their netball friends away from netball was not viewed as a priority for the women, being part of a team and the social interactions involved appeared to drive their participation and enjoyment:

I think because I've always been into team sport and working as part of a team, team player if that's the best way to pronounce it, that means a lot because you have that connection with other people to win games and it satisfies me that I know that I've gone out and done a good workout basically because it works out most of your body don't it? Yeah so ...

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Replicating findings by Kirby and Kluge (2013), the women described how the commitment and community of being part of a team offers a unique and rewarding experience linked to continued participation. This allowed several of the players to compare netball more favourably to keeping fit through individual exercise at a gym:

I wanted to do a team sport so I didn't let anybody down and it meant that I would have to go. I would have to train. I would have to turn up and there was no excuses. Whereas anything I'd done before that was all individual so if I didn't fancy going for a run then I wouldn't go...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

I think it's an easy way to get fit because I like playing, I like playing netball. That's obviously the other reason because I love the game, but because you're playing in a team you have to put your all in really you have to keep going whereas if you go out for a run and you don't really feel like it you can stop or give in or whatever but when you're playing in more of a team its more so that you want to do it for your team as well as yourself so ...

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

I think it's more social, in social terms, netball is more socialising as you socialise with other people whereas the gym you sort of focus 'right I've got an hour' at the gym so you just get on and do it or I can quickly go for a half hour run.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

The stories of the nine women supported the themes of the social context of team sport and team sport as an enjoyable and meaningful activity as reported by Anderson et al. (2009), and echoes the findings by Russell (2002) who reported team membership as the most important reason the women in their study engaged in netball. However, in this study, data differentiated between the different constructs of enjoyment and the importance of each to all participants which was perhaps reflective of their individual positions in the overlapping fields of work, family, and netball. The social connections and social networks experienced through netball have developed the women's social capital, contributing to their continued sports involvement. The women in this study had participated in team sports throughout their lives and so had developed an enduring relationship with competitive team sport:

It's like going back in time and being a kid when you're playing. Like you don't ... I still get the same feeling that I had when I was 13, and you get now, like you go on match day, you're practically wearing the same clothes but a bit bigger, you've got a kit bag...

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

The data displays many commonalities running throughout the women's reasons for participation and the factors that contribute to their enjoyment, however, these common themes were not necessarily static, and the women's intentions and meanings adjusted with their lifestyle:

Yeah because originally it was about playing a team sport and getting fit whereas now I've got a bit more determination.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

I think when I was younger I wanted to go further, I probably thought I could, but now I'm just happy to ... I'll train to obviously try and get better and to learn new things but yeah I'm just happy to play really.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

I'm not as motivated by netball so there's lots of different factors and lots of different things in my life that I'm trying to juggle as well.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Isabella described new competing priorities with netball and her waning motivation, but prior to the study, at around the age of 30, netball had held a much higher importance for her:

...two or three years ago I was running all the time and netball was a much higher focus actually. Like I tried to run every day and even went through, this is a bit embarrassing because it was never gonna happen and I was 30 at the time so way too old, but there was a thing, this is really embarrassing, there was a thing there was Mavericks² trials so we were sent the things and a teammate was saying did anyone on the team want to do it and so her and I on the team trained, we literally followed this regime that was sent out that even people who are in the team don't do, it was like weights and everything. I was the fittest I'd ever been in my whole life! I was doing all these shuttle runs and everything every single day and I was like I'm gonna do the best I can. And we didn't get in but the good thing was, the good thing was we were just as fit as... there were England players in there, and I was just as fit as them when we were doing all the fitness things to start with, so I was just so serious and focussed on netball at that point in time thinking that this was what I want to do but I was way too old anyway. But um yeah, it was a good experience yeah, they were all so massively tall as well, mental!

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

From Isabella's story, alongside the narratives of the other eight women, what does become

² Mavericks are a super league netball club based in the UK.

apparent is that the meaning of netball is not unilateral, it forms part of these women's identities and offers them a multitude of benefits relating to their current lifestyle and life stage:

I see it is something that makes me me. Because I use it as time to let off frustration. I see it as a time to go and see friends. I see it as a time to have fun. It's more than just playing a sport. It's what you get from it. And I think even if we lose a game as long as I know that we've all played well or that I've played well I don't really take it that personally. I don't know. I think it's easier than running like because running can really get you down because its only you whereas I know I give it 100% in netball and yeah I don't think I've ever turned up to a game and been like 'I can't really be arsed today, I'm not really gonna play very well' and played badly. I've turned up and gone 'not today' but as soon as I'm on court its completely different. So I don't know I see it as quite a lot of things.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

The women cited many common elements of netball that create a meaning and attachment for their participation, nevertheless, the complex nature of sports participation is reflected in the unique combination of these meanings expressed by each individual participant. For example, netball as a means to maintain physical health is a key feature for all, but for some this meaning is created through developing their physical fitness, for others controlling weight may be more significant and some may use netball to balance their diet. The type of capital that is valued also varied between the different fields the women occupied and is once again unique to each individual. It is these nuances of personal meaning that illustrate the multifarious nature of female sports participation, which are reflective of a personal habitus that causes an individual to think and act in a certain way in different situations.

7.3 Prioritising time: work commitments

Participation in general recreational physical activity and sport in particular, has shown SES to be a critical factor (Eime et al., 2017; Stalsberg and Pedersen, 2018). This is reflected by the women in this study who all worked in what could be termed 'professional' careers which require "a degree or equivalent qualification, with some occupations requiring postgraduate qualifications and/or a formal period of experience-related training" (Office

for National Statistics, 2010, p. online). All nine women held similar levels of economic capital. Six of the women worked full-time and three, worked part-time. Of the five women who were mothers Lisa and Emma both worked full-time and Rebecca, Isabella and Sam, worked part-time hours. Four of the participants also held secondary employment; Hannah taught dance, Rebecca taught swimming, Anna had a receptionist job and a wine business, and Emma coached netball at Downtown Netball Club, which she considered a second job rather than an extension of netball as a hobby. Several of the women mentioned stress related to their work, particularly those that worked in education:

I had a lot of responsibility, and it was too much, um I thought I can't see myself doing this for the next like 60 years.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

I only taught one year full time before I had my eldest son, it wasn't planned, um and then I was coming home from school, sleeping for about 2 hours, getting up and planning every single night and hallucinating about school in my sleep, everything was like school school school! [...] I 'm not a very laid-back person either and I suffer a bit from stress so I... we decided I'd rather have less stress and less money...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Hannah, as a PE teacher and learning director at her school, held additional responsibilities, and often worked longer hours to accommodate for fixtures and squad training, but the stress of these long hours stemmed from a slightly different source:

[...] the new puppy, I got her to help my other dog who got separation anxiety so that was putting a lot of stress on me last year and a lot of money I was spending on sort of day care and things for her to go to. And now I've got the puppy things have settled down a little bit in that respect but it's a lot harder work because I've got to take them out very early before work and I've got to take time out in the evenings as well ...

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

In contrast, Rebecca did not express any stress involved with her teaching career:

I love teaching and I'll always be in teaching and I don't particularly want to go any higher in terms of I'd never really want to be out of the classroom so I'm quite happy just plodding along, just my little teaching job.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

For others stress arose due to various aspects of their work, such as emotional stress caused by the nature of Anna's role in child protection, and in Emma's case the sheer volume of work she had to process due to staff shortages:

[...] so [wife] does get the brunt of it quite a bit because [...] my department tends to be the 'go to' for anything that people don't know what to do with so you tend to get a lot of that comes through and it can be really busy. Stuff like that's quite stressful, sometimes the workload is just like, because obviously we're short staffed as well so it's like the workload's pretty full on. So yeah it can be. I don't think I tend to bring it home too much, normally I just let it out at work. I swear a lot at work [laughter]

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

The sources of stress for Sam had arisen since returning to work part-time: following maternity leave Sam was forced to forgo her seniority to secure the working hours she sought:

now I've been there a few months and my deputy's not very good I'm like 'Oh I wish ... I could definitely do that and on part time hours'.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

Sam also admitted to “*stressing*” the night before work to prepare for the early start and ensuring her son had everything he needed for the following day. This caused Sam to dislike Monday night training as she would prefer to spend time at home to organise things. Similarly, Lisa described herself as being caught in a perpetual cycle of dropping the children at school, rushing to work, completing a full day's work and then hurrying to pick them up from school or an after-school club to then have to cook dinner before one of the children were back out for an evening activity.

In comparison, Abbie's work and homelife differed greatly. Firstly, she lived at home with her parents with no dependants, which afforded her a certain freedom, with little negotiation needed as to how she chose to spend her time. Secondly, she worked in a very relaxed environment:

[...] he's [uncle] very much into rowing so we have our chats every Monday morning about how we got on at the weekend and things like that and how much training we're doing that week and it's quite nice because all of us are into sport and things like that.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

For many women in the UK negotiating leisure time above and beyond work and family does not feature in their busy lives (Wattis et al., 2013), and although the women in this study do negotiate their leisure time, their lives are not static and circumstances change, causing their priorities to change accordingly. Of the nine women Abbie was perhaps the least career orientated and had recently moved back to the area after failing to settle in London, where she previously held the responsibility of managing a flagship store:

I really enjoy it and it's... I prefer to play netball than have the job I had in London earning more money. I'm much happier here working less and playing more netball.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

The job involved irregular working patterns and, as Abbie is someone that thrives on routine, she struggled to adapt to the fluctuating schedule. For Abbie, economic capital was less important and she valued playing netball over this particular job, however, this may be reflective of Abbie's available family support and resources, as she was able to return to live with her parents, and secure a job in the family business. Although in a very different stage of her life to Abbie, Isabella, who was married with children, also ranked netball as more important than her career in teaching:

That's why netball has always been really important actually because I didn't feel like my career was the most important thing.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

This indicates that Isabella and Abbie valued the type of capital that netball provides, or, felt that netball provides greater value to their lives, than that offered through paid work. On a similar note, although not quite as extreme as Abbie and Isabella, some of the women relinquished second jobs and additional income to create more space for netball.

Well now I've given up the dancing on the Saturday that was kind of, the point is that it would release me a little bit at weekends so I could play [first team] um especially because we play regularly on Sunday now as well I thought if I'm free on Saturday it's not so bad playing on Sunday. It got to the point where I was working 6 days a week and then playing netball on Sunday and I don't think it's fair on them [the dogs] that they're stuck at home all day every day in the week and then at weekends as well. So financially it's taken a toll, obviously not getting paid for the dancing but work life balance and all!

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Shifting priorities also featured in Anna's narrative as, to accommodate her marathon training, she reduced the hours of her receptionist job from two evenings a week to one. In this instance, she prioritised her wine business, netball, and marathon training above earning a greater secondary income. Despite saving for a house, Anna valued the social and cultural capital she was able to develop by these other activities more than economic capital. In contrast, Rebecca, in the face of her husband's resistance, placed greater priority on her secondary role as a swim teacher, but this was not due to the economic capital it provided:

I think because I've always swum so much and you get so much satisfaction and it's something that you can always see the improvement and the kids get so excited when they've done something they couldn't before and that just... I would never give them up [...] And I've literally taught all the time since I was 16 because I always thought I'd give something back to the sport that's done so well for me and I think everyone should learn to swim.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

The working lives of these nine women reveal that before they start to introduce any hobbies and interests, their time is occupied by their already busy lifestyles, and as a

consequence of this several of them mentioned stress as part of their lives. This replicates findings by Wattis et al. (2013) that women who strive to achieve a balance between work, family and leisure, often create an additional demand and stress on their lives. Devoting time away from household duties to engage in their own hobbies and pastimes has also been reported by Roster (2007) to elicit feelings of guilt, however, none of the women in this study voiced such feelings. The meaning created throughout their lives and their drive and passion to play netball, did at times cause friction in their relationships, however, negotiation is part of life and the women demonstrate negotiated lives as they balance competing demands. This negotiation is ongoing; it is a process of accommodation and compromise informed by the women's priorities at the time. The data also shows that economic capital was not a key driving force for these women, with different forms of capital valued by individuals, however, this may be reflective of the SES of this particular group and a lesser 'need' to earn more money.

7.4 Prioritising time: netball commitments

Female runners were found to prioritise the needs of other family members over their own running and typically fitted their running around the schedule of others (Bond and Batey, 2005). In a team sport this is not always possible and the women in this study who, despite the stresses they faced, all continued to ensure they had the time and space for Uptown netball within their weekly schedule. Due to their varying lifestyles though, the volume of netball took a very different shape for each of them. Anna only played for Uptown, which involved training on a Monday evening and matches on a Sunday morning, balancing competing time demands of her day job, the wine business and gym reception job. Several of the women chose to play in the local mixed netball leagues on a Thursday and Sunday evening, with some, like Rebecca and Kerry, committed to every week and others like Emma, Lisa, Isabella, and Sam tailoring their involvement around family commitments:

Sundays sometimes if we've had people over for dinner or we're going out for dinner then I won't play Sunday nights. Like I didn't play last night because we had ... we were supposed to have a match in the morning but also because we went out to a friend's house for lunch at about 2pm so I thought I don't want to ...

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

The women who engaged in mixed netball relished the challenge of playing against men, Abbie even admitted it was her favourite form of netball to play. This is perhaps indicative of the women enjoying challenging the perceived norm of male superiority and female inferiority in sport (Staurowsky, 2016). Although the women enjoyed the greater physical challenge, mixed netball was viewed as more fun and less serious than Uptown netball. The field of mixed netball appeared to value different forms of capital than Uptown netball and operated within its own unique doxa; it was less structured, the women simply had to turn up and play, dress code was more relaxed with no team kit, and the focus was on socialising and having fun, creating a stark contrast from the culture at Uptown.

Perhaps reflective of their lifestyles, Abbie and Hannah tended to play the most netball. Hannah trained with Uptown on a Monday evening, competed in a local league on a Tuesday night, played mixed netball on Thursday evenings, occasionally received a call up for the first team on a Saturday, played for the second team on Sunday morning, and completed the week with a Sunday evening mixed league game. Though Abbie did not play on a Tuesday evening, she sometimes played in a Wednesday evening league and often played for teams in various leagues if they needed players, resulting in an equally demanding netball timetable. In contrast, reflective of her work and family commitments, Emma only played for Uptown, with an occasional mixed league game, but she also coached at Downtown Netball Club on a Tuesday evening:

the other three days either arranging the team if the first team have got a match or dealing with committee stuff or answering Facebook messages or answering emails so it's pretty full on my spare time... it's pretty full on with the netball which is a source of contention with [wife]...[...]

But yeah it does massively impact especially when you're playing away games already, or if [wife]'s working and then I'm working and then through the netball season it's... a full weekend for us as a family is a rare thing [...] And I think not helped by the fact that everything used to be quite widespread across the first team and then as we've lost players and we've got younger players coming in there isn't the distribution of jobs. It's kind of fallen to me, Zoe and Olivia really and it's constant so you're arranging travel, arranging a team and then if you've got an extra player

then you have to fill out a load of paperwork to add that player onto your team if you're using someone from the second team, so it's like constant. And then you go and then if it's an away game you're out of the house from 9, 9.30 through to 5 and when you get back it's like I've got to write a match report and I've got to submit all this stuff like if it's a home game I've got to send all the paperwork, send all the paperwork off, and then you're on to Monday and it's training and it's like who's coming training who's not coming training and your phone's going off with people like 'I'm not coming training this week!'. And then it's like Tuesday I've got to plan my coaching session so I'm at home at 5, but don't talk to me until 6 and then I'm out of the house at 7.10! [...] I did have a conversation with somebody at my coaching session about this. She's 46 and she said she's been doing it for you know 30 years or whatever and she's got a little girl so she does, her training is an hour away, she has to travel an hour to get to her training and so I said 'how's your husband is he really understanding?' and she just said 'oh I just tell him I've been married to netball longer than I've been married to him' and it is actually like that. It is like a marriage. It is like a constant...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

For Abbie and Hannah, although they played the most netball and netball formed part of their identity, it did not define who they were to any great extent, whereas for Emma netball was part of her identity. Therefore, for some participants, not only was it the time spent actually playing netball, it was also the role they held within the team that impacted upon their identity and the additional time consumed by netball related activities. Isabella had previously captained the first team and encountered a similar experience to Emma:

Yes because there's even more to think about in your spare time as well, of an evening I'd sit down and spend time on a Saturday morning if we weren't you know playing until Sunday sit down and sort out the team and make phone calls to what team we were going to have. It doesn't seem like much but it was...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

The role of second team captain posed less of a challenge, as Rebecca did not feel this level

of responsibility. This may reflect her leadership style or the difference between the first and second team players, the level of competition and the less competitive nature of fighting for positions and game time:

All I have to do is arrange the team, pay some money and sign a card. Other than that for me it's no different to playing. I just have to think a bit... if I've got extra players, or where's the best place for them to play? And I do message Sam so she can check everything over.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Therefore, the volume of netball that the women played varied, often dependent on their other commitments and priorities in competing fields. Within the field of netball, different formats of netball formed differing sub-fields, which all operated according to their own rules or doxa. Though the volume of netball played by the women differed, netball for Uptown seemed a priority for all. Other forms of netball appeared less important and were typically negotiated around other aspects of their lives, providing a contrast to Uptown where their lives were often negotiated around netball. The women's level of involvement in the organisation of the Uptown teams and additional club duties also fluctuated, with Emma, as first team captain, often investing a greater amount of time beyond the actual physical act of playing and training. This higher level of symbolic capital held by Emma required a much greater investment of her time than the other players.

7.5 Competing priorities: other pursuits and pastimes

As part of their weekly schedule, many of the women engaged in hobbies additional to netball, although netball remained the priority. Anna, Kerry and Rebecca were all training towards running a marathon during the second season and their marathon training became an added layer of negotiation around work, home life and netball:

[...] Monday I have netball training, Tuesday I go to track, Wednesday I have circuits, Thursday normally netball if there's no netball I run, Friday I generally have a PT session or run and then or go out you know see people – have a life! [...] weekends are generally spent with family and friends. I try and run on Saturday and netball twice maybe on Sunday and shopping and all those other things you need to fit in...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Within this busy schedule Kerry identified a very clear priority list:

[...] netball is like number one and then like I've decided to run a marathon so that's number two, and cross country I have a kind of hate hate relationship with that at the moment.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

All the women engaged in other hobbies, with the majority related to physical activity and sport. Abbie attended weekly clubbercise with her mum and sister, Hannah tried to swim a couple of times a week, Emma ran and worked out at the gym, Sam and Lisa also went running. Maintaining her passion for adventure sports, Abbie also tried to fit in some skiing and the occasional wakeboarding and open water swimming, as she valued this as part of her identity. Hannah admitted that her enthusiasm lies within sport rather than fitness as she likes to be mentally challenged as well, although this was conflicted as she also conceded that she would like to run more:

I mean I'd like to get into running, I'd love to get into running. It's not something that I would massively enjoy but I started doing it a few years ago before I hurt my knee and um I started to enjoy it. Once I started to get better at it and it wasn't so painful, I don't mean painful as in like hurting me, but you know like when its uncomfortable I started to get fitter and I felt loads better and was really enjoying it so yeah it would be something that I'd like to do.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

The outlier here appeared to be Isabella, as she engaged in very different pastimes outside of netball, including writing poetry and playwriting, running a church group and creative household activities. Isabella also played the flute but, with a lower priority than her other activities, she had stopped this due to lack of time. Now she is older and developing other interests Isabella felt her priorities changing:

I don't need to be fit to do that [writing] and I don't need my body in full working order and I'm really loving it so... that's probably one of my main... church things is... that's my faith and I'm always going to want to do that so probably... I don't know

whether I'd say that's a priority in terms of the groups as I don't have to run the groups so if it's the case of running a church group or doing writing then writing would probably be... cos I don't have to do... cos the new church group my friend and I are going to... because it's going to be an art based one anyway it's using the arts so it ties in with everything erm so netball is now, could be close to the bottom and will probably have to fall off next year or as the children do more so...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

The age difference in the participants may have impacted the type of hobbies they engaged in and the priority they placed upon them. Throughout the study Isabella and Emma contemplated retirement from netball to cater for shifting priorities but, by way of contrast, Lisa came out of retirement to play netball again. These instances illustrate the conflict that habitus can create. When an individual's habitus structures their decisions about what they want to do but there are barriers and obstacles preventing them from doing so, problems can arise which causes tension and stress. It is also notable that, with the exception of Isabella, none of the participants engaged in hobbies from alternative domains such as art or music. The habitus created as children may perhaps reflect this, with Isabella's family placing less emphasis on sport than those of the other participants, however, as adults and particularly those within relationships and as parents, although the habitus of playing team sport was ingrained in their being, negotiating the time for netball and other hobbies involved collaboration and cooperation.

7.6 Working in partnership or power struggles?

Rebecca, Sam, Emma, and Isabella were all married with children, Kerry was married with no children and Anna and Abbie had long-term partners that they were saving up to move in with. Only Hannah was single amongst the group and she felt this is why she played a lot of netball:

last time I was with somebody I cut down quite a lot on my netball because it is quite demanding. I think when you're on your own you can do as much as you like but it does... I think you do have to invest a bit of time in people don't you?

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

The admission by Hannah that she had previously reduced her netball when in a relationship partly supports research by van Houten et al. (2015), that moving in with a partner or getting married increased the risk of stopping their sport. In contrast, although Abbie was in a relationship, she still played a lot of netball and felt this was because her boyfriend, who played hockey at county standard, understood and supported her choice to play netball. This level of empathy may underpin how the couple negotiated their sports activities, with both placing value on sport participation. Yet, even though they both played sport, they did not engage in any sport activities together, each sticking to their own sports and individual training regimes. There was also a perceived imbalance in terms of their sport, as Abbie, because her boyfriend played at a higher standard, perceived that his hockey held greater importance than her netball. Though Abbie reported playing sport was typically a positive feature of their relationship she also cited certain drawbacks:

I think sometimes we get frustrated because we feel like we don't see each other but actually we both understand each other's commitments and it's not an issue – he doesn't begrudge me playing netball and I don't begrudge him playing hockey so it kind of works out quite well for both of us because we don't see it as an issue whereas I've been in past relationships where my boyfriends resented me playing netball and picking him, picking netball over him whereas [boyfriend] is not like that at all. And he's happy for me to play as much netball or do as much sport as I want.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

The perception by Abbie that her boyfriend held higher symbolic capital with the field of sport created a hierarchy within their relationship. This contrasted with Isabella's relationship where the power imbalance was reversed:

...he used to do football with some of his friends on a Monday, but obviously that's when I play netball so he wouldn't do that because it's not as serious as if it meant I couldn't play...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Although her husband was physically active through biking to and from work every day,

Isabella found that his lack of a hobby was not necessarily a positive thing and, as a solution, bought him a 10-week pottery course for Father's Day to encourage him to actively participate in his own pursuit. This action may be a result of feelings of guilt that Isabella herself was going out and playing a sport leaving her husband at home looking after the children. Similarly, Emma's wife previously played football but as her enjoyment waned and, with childcare an issue, has not replaced it with anything:

She used to play football, but she retired, I say retired she just stopped playing. That's another source of contention because she needs a hobby. But she's doing this running thing and she's getting quite into it. She's doing this same challenge I am so I think she might start getting into running, but her issue is that she doesn't like to do things on her own.

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Emma and Isabella felt their partners should have a hobby; however, their lack of hobby may be a result of the priority that netball held within the household. For those women whose partners did play sport further negotiation was needed. Rebecca's husband played football on a Sunday morning and due to this time conflict with netball, parents provided the childcare to enable participation for both of them. On rare occasions when this was not possible the two children attended netball with Rebecca and spectated. For the most part Rebecca and her husband were supportive of one another's sports, albeit, Thursday evenings appeared to be the one power struggle between them:

They [husband's team] play in a league on Thursday so if I haven't got a game he plays down there. But then at the same time he said to me 'even if you've got netball I'm still going to play if I want to'. But he doesn't like it because it's late, so it depends what kind of a busy week he's had. They don't play until nine so he's home half ten so it's quite late then.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Similar to Rebecca's arrangements, Sam and her husband allocated set nights in the week where Sam played netball and her husband went to the gym. On a Sunday morning parents provided childcare so that Sam could play netball and her husband could play football. If, for

any reason that was not an option, then due to the younger age of her son who could not spectate unsupervised, Sam would not play. This suggests more traditional gendered roles within the household that ultimately it is the mother that is responsible for the childcare. It also aligns with research by Spowart et al. (2010) citing the reluctance of women to pay for childcare to pursue leisure activities.

For those women whose partner was not sporty or active this also posed an issue and the women tried to encourage them to become more active, reflective of their own values and habitus towards sport participation. Anna, whose boyfriend's main hobby was watching the local football team, persuaded him to take up running and enter a half marathon event with her. In the same way Kerry, whose husband preferred music, gaming and living up to the 'not sporty' label in his family, felt it was important for him to be healthy and active:

[...] for his 30th birthday I brought him PT sessions which he hated. So since February he has been doing a PT session every week and his PTI is also mine so he has like a training programme so we have an app on our phone so he tells us what we should be doing and you have to go and do them and they turn green! So [husband] is probably exercising about 2 or 3 times a week now. And like he ran his first 10k in Sheffield the other week [...] and we ran round and he's like 'Oh I hate you so much!' And I was saying 'its ok we're at 7k 3k to go' and he's like "shut up!" so I'll never do that again!

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Lisa's husband used to play football but has since retired to be more involved in his children's sports activities and, although Lisa did give netball up initially, she has since decided that she did not want to follow suit:

But I'm not giving up because I feel like it's good for you, it's a good mind-set and I like being physically active.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Six of the women were already playing netball before they met their partners, with Lisa, Rebecca and Kerry joining a netball club later during the relationship. With the exception of

Kerry's husband, all of the women's' partners and spouses had, or previously had, an interest in playing sport and so appeared to understand why the women wanted to continue to play netball and supported their participation, either through sharing childcare, sacrificing their own activities or simply by not putting pressure on them to stay at home instead. This corresponds with research findings by Blum et al. (2004) which highlighted the importance of support from the partner/husband or family and friends in enabling the women in their study to participate in sport and exercise post pregnancy. The prioritisation of netball in some of the households in this study suggests a more egalitarian relationship than perhaps would have been the case 30 years ago. However, support can take many forms including physical side-line support, financial support, and emotional support.

7.6.1 Social support and unspectating spouses

Throughout the season it was incredibly rare to see any partners or husbands spectating the second team matches. For some, like Sam and Rebecca, this was because their partners were also playing sport on a Sunday morning, for others such as Lisa it was due to childcare, but some partners just refused to come and watch, almost as if netball was an anathema to them:

[...] we had a big argument about this because I wanted him to come and watch me play a game and he said he was scared that the ball would hit him [laughter] on the side line and he wouldn't know what to do! And I got really cross and he didn't come he stood his ground.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

[...] he's just, he's quite shy like and he doesn't ... like he doesn't just want to come and stand down there on his own and stuff.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

For many of the male partners, netball may be considered a gendered space, with the men not feeling comfortable in that environment, akin to the women in Middleton's (1986) study where the cricket club was seen as a male space and the wives simply dropped their husbands off and collected them from cricket. For other players, not spectating was their

own preference. Even as a child Abbie did not enjoy anyone watching her and, in line with the imbalance in symbolic capital perceived by Abbie between netball and her boyfriend's hockey, she did not encourage her boyfriend to watch. There were often more spectators at the first team games, although still rarely husbands and partners, but instead other women from the local netball community. Emma explained her wife "begrudgingly" watched some of the first team games but mainly to allow their daughter to see Emma play:

Like she'll [wife] bring [daughter] to a game and that because [daughter] likes watching it and shouting and stuff, and she gets all the attention from the girls afterwards so she's like 'yes this is great' and [wife]'s kind of like [pulls grumpy face].

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Throughout the season the only partner that attended second team games was Rebecca's husband and he came down two or three times to watch with the children, when he did not have his own football game. In addition, he also played mixed netball occasionally on a Sunday or Thursday evening with Rebecca. He did not appear to be influenced by any gender stereotypes, similar to those reported by Tagg (2008), whereby men who played netball were often labelled as 'effeminate' or 'gay cross-dressers'. In contrast, Sam admitted that she had tried to encourage her husband to play but received a definite 'no'. Emma recalled that her wife did try mixed netball once and seemed to enjoy playing it more than watching it, but continued to refer to the sport as 'pansyball'. This may be reflective of her own sport experiences playing football and her perception of netball as being too feminine and 'soft'. Therefore, although the notion of netball as a feminine sport was not stated by the nine women as a key motive for their participation it may have deterred other women, such as Emma's wife, from engaging in the sport, suggesting that for some women, conforming to the feminine ideal was not an attraction to the sport.

Returning to partners and spectating, with many of the women viewing netball as 'me time' and their space away from work and family, perhaps it is not surprising that partners refrained from entering that space rather than it being necessarily gendered. It was the women's time away from the family responsibilities and a chance for them to shed the identity of mother, wife, and partner, which perhaps would be negated with the presence of their spouse or partner. In addition, with netball perhaps victim to the patriarchal push

away from constant facilities and often reliant on hiring spaces to play, netball may not permit the social space for spouses and partners to make their own space within the club. This may lead to netball only ever being viewed as a female hobby and not a sport in the eyes of partners and spouses and, therefore, not worthy of spectating.

7.6.2 Financing netball

The cost of playing netball is also something that several of the women discussed with their partners. Typically, the cost of netball comprises the initial affiliation and joining fees at the beginning of each season, which at Uptown were around £60 per player, with a monthly fee of £15. When playing in the local mixed leagues, players typically contributed £3.50 per game on a pay as you play basis. At Uptown players also paid for their own match kit and had to purchase suitable netball trainers, and so throughout a season the cost can accumulate. The first team also had to pay petrol money to whoever drives when travelling to away matches and contribute towards the after-match buffet. This made an annual cost of around £500 a season for playing first team netball and £400 for second team netball, with many of the players paying to play in other local leagues costing around another £100-£200 a season. Due to this cost being spread over the season by direct debit most of the players did not even consider the cost of netball and viewed it as a minimal monthly cost:

[...] I don't think you can probably put a price on it because as long as I get the enjoyment from it I don't really care how much it costs if you know what I mean?

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Hannah adopted a more pragmatic approach and compared the cost of netball to a gym membership:

I used to go to the gym which I cancelled that membership as I wasn't using it enough so I think, I pay £15 a month for Uptown netball which is the training and the matches, and I play Tues, Thurs, Sun night which is about £3 average which is £10 a week plus the £15 so £55 a month.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

The financial contributions of playing netball had, however, been a concern for Emma and Isabella. Emma disclosed that her wife reminded her of the financial implications quite regularly and Isabella remembered when money for netball caused issues within her relationship:

Yeah so [husband] and I, [...] we don't really have a lots of arguments about netball but we used to a while back and one of them would be about money being spent but then it is very cheap compared to a lot of other things sports wise I could be doing. Yeah that's not an issue now.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

For some it was not only netball costs that they had to consider but the cost of netball combined with their other hobbies:

I try not to add it up [laughter] and the more I do the more expensive it is! So netball is not too bad really is it? £15 a month and then £3.50 for matches. But PT sessions we pay £100 a month for those, we get 4 so ... and then joining... I'm a member of the running club and I'm a member of the netball so that's membership fees and then like petrol to competitions. Like that cross country I went to, which was horrendous, I ran for half an hour and it took us 2 hours to get there! So yeah there is a financial cost. And then also kit like I wouldn't buy cheap netball trainers because like the time I fell over I wasn't even wearing netball trainers so I've got a thing about that now that I've got to have decent ones and then because I think I have to have decent netball trainers I have to have decent running trainers, and decent cross country shoes...I've got a lot of trainers [laughter] So yeah I probably do spend quite a lot but I don't mind. Like its fun.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

With gym membership incurring an average annual membership fee of around £480 (Allan, 2019), typically representative of those within the local area of the participants, many players felt netball was good value for money, as they preferred getting their exercise in a more social way as part of a team. For seven of the players, financial support did not feature, as netball was viewed as being a relatively accessible sport in terms of cost

depending, of course, on the type of trainers purchased. The financial considerations given to netball reflect the SES of the women, with only two of them concerned about netball costs at any point. This provides support for the findings by Stalsberg and Pedersen (2018) that women of higher socioeconomic status were more likely to participate in sport and physical activity. It is one less constraint for them to negotiate. While this might not seem a barrier to the participants in this study it is likely to be a deterrent to people from low SES backgrounds and, therefore, perhaps explains the narrow SES demographic of this sample and the importance of considering economic capital in the dynamics of adult female sports participation.

7.6.3 Emotional support: injury, pregnancy and empowerment

Not only do partners support the women through making time and space for netball they often provide emotional support. Lisa describes herself as fortunate to have her husband and that they are “*together and a strong unit*”. Isabella’s husband also showed his support when Isabella decided to attend the Mavericks trials:

I even took the weights camping and I had them in the tent and I was like “I have to do these weights every day!” [Laughing] [...] He [husband] was helping me, timing me and everything and I was doing all these long runs and short runs and interval training and everything... yeah I had never been so fit. I felt amazing! [...] I’d be like running all the time like once... every time its bed time [husband] would put the children to bed and I’d go running in that time period so it wasn’t into the whole evening. So it wasn’t very nice for [husband] to do bedtime every evening but...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Injuries were also something that the women experienced, and Kerry admitted that her husband said she was “*unbearable to live with*” after she sustained an ankle injury, resulting in a month of being unable to play. Kerry was frustrated and bored, but it was not just the lack of netball that Kerry missed:

[...] as well as not playing netball that's when I see a lot of my friends [...] and people from Downtown I'd say are some of my best friends in [City] so if I wasn't seeing them like two or three times a week... it's like you drive to matches together and stuff and I dunno it was just really isolating. Just sitting at home watching TV

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Injury can impact a player's symbolic capital within the field of sport, and it may be this change that the women find difficult to adjust to, as well as the frustration of a barrier to their habitus of sports participation. Pregnancy also changes a player's symbolic capital, as they will have to cease playing at some point, and when to stop playing posed a challenge for some of the women. England Netball (EN) previously advised that "players, coaches, officials should only participate up until their 12th week of pregnancy", however, in 2016 they changed their guidance to "EN recommends that individuals (player, coach, umpire) if pregnant should only participate with approval from their doctor and in accordance with any guidelines issued by EN" (England Netball, 2016). Those women in the study with children would have been pregnant during the implementation of the 12 weeks rule, yet, the decision of when to stop playing netball appeared to be something that the women very much took into their own control:

first pregnancy I didn't play [...] Second pregnancy I... well you had to stop at 12 but it was more like 20 because I played in a jumper at GK for the last bit of it and I trained the whole way though [...] third pregnancy... I trained the whole way through probably until the week before I gave birth and then I came back 5 days after!

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Isabella said her husband was "ok" with the decision but then seemed to reflect and said "Maybe it's really irresponsible but..." Each of the women appeared to take their own approach, but the level of involvement by partners in the decision making was unclear:

As soon as I knew I stopped. Cos I know some people do play up to 20 weeks don't they but no I didn't want to risk losing the baby. Although they say there's not much of a risk but I don't know if there is but in my head all that jumping and stretching ... I

didn't do any exercise at all when I was pregnant believe it or not, I was too scared!
[laughter]

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

[...] even when I was pregnant I was still training, but they knew to take it easy. I think I stopped training about 24 weeks. With [daughter] I played right up until I was 20 weeks pregnant ...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

I stopped playing at 12 weeks, so when I was 12 weeks pregnant and then I went back 6 weeks after I had him [laughter].

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

Kerry fell pregnant during the study and at one training session she confided in me, as she wanted someone else at training to be aware just in case anything happened:

We moved away from the group a little bit and she [Kerry] told me she was 11 weeks pregnant but nobody other than Rebecca knows. She has her 12-week scan on Friday! I give her a hug and congratulate her. We talk about exercising during pregnancy and she says Thursday will be her last netball match but that she will carry on exercising. Although she's no longer going to run the marathon in April. It's interesting that even though she knows she is pregnant she carries on playing. I think about my own pregnancies and in each case I stopped as soon as I found out. Although netball is technically a non-contact sport it can be very physical and I never wanted to take a risk myself, even if it is a low one. I know a few of my friends who have carried on playing up to 20 weeks and it does surprise me that women take these risks. It's interesting as throughout the session I then feel very protective of her and hold my breath when people contact her or challenge her. I also in a way think it's hard on the other players as they don't know she's pregnant and so will challenge her as normal. If something did happen then that player would feel awful.

Reflective Diary, Season two, 20th March 2017

During pregnancy women have cited barriers to physical activity including pregnancy-related symptoms and limitations, time constraints, perceptions of already being active, lack of motivation and concerns over mother–child safety (Coll et al., 2017). Several of the women in this study related to some of these barriers, but data showed that pregnancy was a very personal matter for each woman. Pregnancy very much changes the space the women occupied within the field of sport and all of the mothers in the study returned to netball as soon as they were able, typically around six weeks, with the exception of Isabella who attended training five days after giving birth. The return to netball was also a negotiation to realign their habitus with the field of netball and regain their previous levels of capital within the field.

7.7 Motherhood, parenting and childcare

The demands of becoming a parent and organising a household whilst often engaging in paid work have been shown to negatively impact on women's leisure time to a greater extent than on husbands and fathers, reducing the available time that women have to participate in sport (van Houten et al., 2015; Sayer, 2016). For the women in this study having children did not impact upon their participation, providing support for research by Blum et al. (2004) that having a child does not always equate to withdrawal. However, those participants who had children experienced an additional layer of negotiation to navigate within their schedule, either involving childcare or the children's own activities, as these also needed to be factored into the weekly schedule. Isabella and her husband shared the childcare with her husband getting the children ready in the morning and Isabella responsible for making dinner every evening. They took a very practical approach to managing the household:

[...] we try and sit down on a Sunday night and talk about the week ahead and what's happening and probably close to the beginning of like September or something we'll say what's happening, figuring out what's happening, we have a synchronised diary so if he puts something in his diary it shows up in my diary, yeah it's just that if we forget to put it in the diary and we just spring it on each other... so yeah that's how it works.

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Emma and her wife also shared the childcare, with her wife typically responsible for the beginning of the day, getting their daughter ready and taking her to school, and then Emma picking her up from the grandparents after school. Although, when Emma was on her late shift it became an increasingly tough week for her wife. Weekends were also difficult with Emma's wife working two Saturdays out of every three and Emma described the challenge of being a full-time working parent:

... so the first term, or first half of term was like every week we were getting a phone call, and that's another thing that you find that's really difficult working full time because everything's over the phone like with the teachers, um and then you start to think 'oh is it because like we're not...' because obviously for as much as [wife]'s mum and dad are brilliant and they do so much for us they don't discipline her and they shouldn't have to because it's not really grandparents place is it? But then when she's been naughty at school and I'm walking into Nanny's house and she's got like a bowl full of sweets in front of her and it's like 'no she can't have those!'

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

In the same way, Rebecca and her husband followed an agreed weekly routine, which involved meticulous planning to meet the needs of each family member:

...so [husband] gets up at half past five to go to work and I get up at 6. [...] I'll go and get the kids up. [...] We leave the house about seven thirty, [...] and depending upon what day it is depends where they go. So on a Monday they go the childminders. [...] After school my parents will pick the kids up and take them back to theirs and then I work at school until six. Go and pick the kids up and then go home. Literally mum and dad have fed them, so I put them to bed and then I go out to netball. If [husband]'s working he makes sure he's home by seven. So even if he's working late he makes sure he's home so I can go. [...] Tuesday they [children] are at the in-laws [...] in the morning. And then the in-laws will have them and cook them dinner and [husband] goes there for dinner so I [...] stay at school until six, then I go to [running club] and run til about half seven and then go home [...] a Wednesday I have off so we normally get up about seven [...] take them to school and then I do my PT session and have my run and then just potter around the house doing all those jobs that you put off doing for the week. I pick them up from school and then I let them choose what we do [...]

whether we go for dinner, whether we go swimming, whether we go to activity world, whatever they want to do we do. [...] Thursday they go to the childminders in the morning. I work and leave school about quarter past four and pick them up, take them to street dance which they do at [leisure centre], so I will either do some planning or I'll go to the gym, [...], take them home, have something to eat and then go to netball. Oh [husband]'s out on a Wednesday night, he plays football on a Wednesday so I like make sure I am at home on a Wednesday evening. I don't do anything on a Wednesday. And then on a Friday um they go to the childminders in the morning and then my parents pick them up. And I will go from school to [leisure centre] to go and teach swimming lessons.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Parents featured as consistent support from four of the women in the study that had children, with Lisa, Sam, Emma and Rebecca all relying heavily on their parents for support, with all parents living in close proximity. Again, the outlier in this instance was Isabella, as her parents were not local and her in-laws, who were local, did not babysit regularly, and so Isabella and her husband typically managed the childcare between them. For those in the study with older children, the children's own activities also featured within the weekly planning.

This data points to how complex and multi-dimensional the experiences of the nine women are and how they shift with starting a family, and the children growing up and participating in their own activities. There is no straightforward pattern, no simple cause-effect process. Negotiating leisure time can add an additional layer of demand on women (Wattis et al., 2013) and it is the support from their parents for childcare that appeared significant, with the proximity of parents a key consideration in this support. This provides evidence for an intergenerational family habitus towards sport participation, with parental support to facilitate sports participation not just a feature of the women's childhood experiences, but an ongoing influence that continues into adulthood. By supporting their daughter's habitus towards sports participation during adulthood they are, by default, reinforcing to their grandchildren that sport is a valued leisure activity.

7.7.1 Accommodating children's activities

The intergenerational habitus towards sport participation is also demonstrated in the activities of the women's children, however, this also proved an added pressure for those women that were mothers. As previously mentioned, Emma's daughter attended dancing on a Saturday morning and with her wife working two out of three Saturdays Emma had to negotiate this alongside her netball:

Like I'm sat in the dance room with all the parents that are like made up and I'm like in my netball kit waiting to go and play and I'm like 'oh my god!'

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Due to the value Emma placed on sport, she was keen to ensure that her daughter sampled as many different sports activities as possible:

...obviously if there's a clash between [daughter]'s dancing and whatever sports she wants to do and my netball then that's just life isn't it she has to take priority so...that would just be [...] we've always said that we'll let her try as many things as possible so she can find...so I feel really lucky that netball was my thing do you know what I mean? That was my sport that I loved and I loved it from a young age. And it might not be [daughter]'s thing it might be something that she doesn't get to experience at school so it's kind of like you might have to let her experience as much as possible until she finds her thing.

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Similarly, Lisa endeavoured to provide her children with the support and resources that she felt she had not always received as a child, and this added an extra layer of stress and pressure on to her working week. When one child was out doing sport, she typically stayed at home to look after the other child and help with any schoolwork that they had. Lisa held particular ambitions for her son, who attended several local football academies:

Yeah especially with [son] I'm always looking because I want him to do really well with his football I'm always looking for the next opportunity for him so progressing him, right he's got this, he's doing this, he's doing that ...

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Lisa's desire to offer unconditional support for her children and engage in more sport together as a family, has impacted on her own time for sport:

I don't tend to have much time for me and I've always been sporty from little so I've obviously joined the gym and when I was at the gym I either went before work or I used to go late at night before it closed. However, I'm finding it very hard at the minute.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

A couple of years ago Lisa retired from netball to spend more time with her family but recently started playing again because she missed the social interaction. In contrast, Isabella has found that now she is older many of her friends who had children have now retired from netball and she admitted that, with three children all wanting to do different sport and musical activities, retirement from netball is something she may face in the near future:

[...] netball is now, could be close to the bottom and will probably have to fall off next year or as the children do more so...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Even though Rebecca received high levels of social support from her and her husband's parents and often relied on them to take her children to and from their activities, she acknowledged that this is not always ideal:

[...] my dad was taking [daughter] to swimming lessons but it wasn't... I didn't like the fact that I wasn't seeing her swim, and because I'm so in to swimming and I knew that she could do it but she wasn't doing it, so now I take her and make sure I watch her.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Rebecca also felt it was important that both she and her husband acted as role models for their children particularly as team sports players:

Yeah I like them to see that actually we're both in competitive sports, we both play for a team, everybody works together, and I think it's important for them to have

that as a mentality as well because I don't want them to think it's just them because the other things they do, ballet, swimming, street dance, is all one person.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

All those in the study who were mothers valued sport and saw it as important that their children were active and healthy. Even those women that were yet to have children believed that their own experiences would impact how they decide to parent in the future:

If I ever have kids I know exactly what I'm going to be having them doing. Obviously, it depends on whether it's a girl or a boy you know. Definitely. I stayed out of trouble I think because of all my sport and all the things I did. I just remember other kids sat round the park drinking cider and stuff on a weekend and I'd be at a swimming competition.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

When deciding upon the distribution of capital for their own children, Lisa, Isabella and Rebecca all considered their experiences as children, shaping their children's habitus towards sports participation. Although all of the women grew up in households that supported their sport as children, the women reflect and consider how they could improve such support and opportunity for their own children, providing further support for an intergenerational habitus for sports participation as well as a change in the way that economic, social and cultural capital are distributed by the women as parents.

7.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has explored the meaning that netball holds for the women in this study and the different paths that each of them take to negotiate the time and space to maintain their netball participation whilst operating in a variety of overlapping fields. The women's preference, taste and attachment for playing netball, structured by their habitus towards sport participation, caused conflict and tension and hence the requirement for negotiation. Playing netball was something they had a passion to do but circumstances and relationships precluded them at times. Challenges the women faced involved work demands including shift work and stress, competing hobbies, spending time with partners, childcare

arrangements, children's own activities, as well as managing issues around cost, injury and pregnancy. The women's stories illustrate certain similarities in the challenges faced and the actions taken to overcome them, as well as instances that are unique to each individual and those around them. The amount of netball played varied between the women, whereby those players with fewer responsibilities participated in the most netball on a weekly basis. The type of capital valued by the women also fluctuated with some placing the social and cultural aspects of netball above economic capital. Support from various social networks also proved to be important, especially for those women who were mothers, highlighting the significance of social capital in maintaining female adult sport participation.

The data presented highlight the complex and constantly negotiated reality of life that affects participation in sport and how this is experienced by the women in this study. Negotiating netball is a fluid concept with changing priorities evident as players enter different life stages, however, this does appear to be underpinned by the habitus generated throughout childhood and adolescence, which provides a strong meaning and attachment to sport, driving the negotiation to participate. The nature of this participation in relation to the field of netball is discussed in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8: Club and community: connecting the past and present

8.1 Introduction

The findings from Chapter 6 suggest that there is no unitary pathway to continued sport participation and that, although commonalities exist between the women's stories of childhood, each followed a path with subtle differences. The consequences of childhood experiences on adult participation in sport was shown to be 'a complex picture infused with different layers of influence and intra-family relationships', however, although the women's experiences may have differed, the evidence points towards the formation of a habitus of sport participation. The habitus, defined by Bourdieu (1977, p. 72) as a "system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures", underpins the women's sport experiences as an adult. The results discussed in Chapter 7 indicate that participation in sport is impacted by the intricate and constantly negotiated reality of life and that, once again, although commonalities were evident, the meaning and negotiation of participation was a unique experience for each of the women in this study. The women's ingrained habitus towards sport participation gained throughout their childhood appeared to underpin their attachment to playing sport, which shaped how they negotiated their participation, and the value they placed on different forms of capital gained from this participation.

This chapter brings the story up to date and links the past to the present, connecting the stories in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, and the relationship between the women's habitus, capital and the social space (or field) they occupy today. Practices arrive through the interaction between an individual's habitus and their current circumstances (Maton, 2014). This chapter explores the theme 'club and community' (illustrated in Figure 8.1 below), which continues the women's stories by critically analysing the relationship between habitus and capital in the field of netball participation, their experiences of operating within this field and the impact this has on their enjoyment, identity, and ultimately their continued participation.

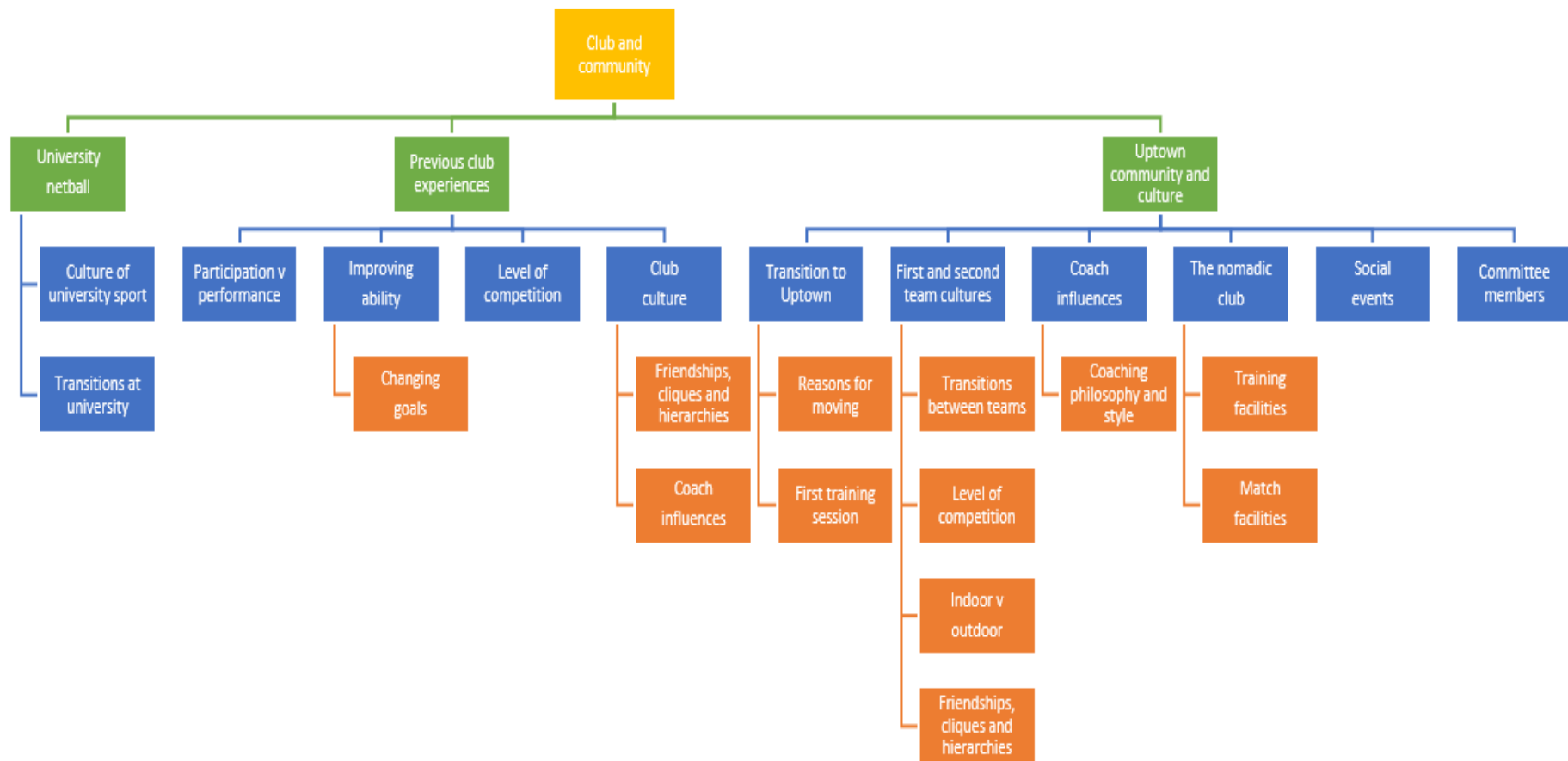


FIGURE 8.1 THEMATIC MAP OF 'CLUB AND COMMUNITY'

The chapter begins by discussing the experiences of university netball, and any previous clubs, before moving on to focus on Uptown Netball Club, the women's transition to the club, their experiences of the culture at the club, the sense of community that netball offers the women and how these factors impact upon the women's netball experiences. The story of 'club and community' is told through the women's own voices using excerpts from the participants' interviews, as well as my own experiences and perceptions of the culture and community at Uptown, conveyed from my own field notes and reflective diary.

8.2 University netball: culture and transitions

Starting at university is not only an educational transition but in terms of playing sport includes experiencing new coaches, less parental support, and new friendships (Brown et al., 2015). Of the seven women that attended University, only Hannah, Isabella and Sam participated in university netball. As a university student, and undergoing a significant transition from living at home to becoming more independent, Anna found that the need to earn money and work as a waitress throughout university prevented her from entering into the full experience of university sport:

I did find at Uni with sport that you were either in it or you weren't. Especially like Wednesday social nights I wasn't dressed up – I was dressed up as a waitress! [...] it's quite intense and they do everything together and again that is your social circle.

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

This intensity of participation and the culture of university sport was something that the participants either embraced or rebuffed. Emma missed the university netball trials in her first year due to injury and, although she trialled in her second year, she decided not to continue playing:

I did go for the trial in my second year and I just... I was like 'no' this isn't... I just didn't like it at all, this isn't my cup of tea. But I think that was because they were talking to me like I was a freshman [...] whereas I was just like, no I don't like it, I don't like this so I just, I'm just gonna play with my own team that's fine. So yeah, I didn't carry on with that it wasn't my cup of tea.

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Prior to university, Emma, having already made the transition to adult netball, was an established player at her home club, with a coaching role, and appeared to dislike being considered a new player and struggled to adapt to this identity and lack of status within the university team. Her cultural capital as a player did not seem to be recognised in this new environment, affording her little symbolic capital within the hierarchy of the university system. Even though Emma did not play netball for the university, unlike Anna, netball remained an important part of her life during this time:

...for my final year I literally didn't care what the subject matter of the courses were, I literally picked off courses so that by Wednesday dinner time I was on the train ready to get home in time for training. It is my biggest regret really because I could have put my entire degree at risk just so that I could go and play netball because I used to coach, and I used to like it!

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

For those women whereby netball had not been their main sport as a teenager, such as Kerry and Rebecca, at university they continued to engage with their main childhood sport. Kerry was a member of the university sailing team and Rebecca continued her swimming, although Rebecca found the standard lacking compared to what she had been used to and the pool closed after her first year. Rebecca did not play any sport at university after this, but she did frequent the socials and embraced the sporting community, maintaining her social and cultural capital as a 'sporty person'. Upon entering university, even though Hannah had already made the transition to adult netball whilst at school, her main sport was swimming, but, unlike Rebecca, when swimming became untenable, Hannah made the transition from swimming to netball:

So when I went to uni I attempted to join the swimming team as well, but where they trained was just miles from where I lived and it was impossible, I couldn't afford it for a start, the bus fares and stuff, so I ended up kind of giving up the swimming and going into netball, so that's kind of how I started playing for the Uni netball team, as I couldn't make the swimming and the netball was only down the road.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Hannah also embraced the social side of being part of the university team:

... you go off and play your games on the Wednesday afternoon and although it's really competitive and at a good level, I mean I remember going down to Canterbury to play. That was a real long way. And when we got back of course everyone gets dressed up and goes out, so that was kind of fun as well.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Sam and Isabella, also prior engagers in adult netball, continued with netball throughout university, suggesting that for those that had played adult netball prior to university, the attraction, or *illusio* towards netball remained strong. Isabella felt her team were of a good standard and enjoyed the experience, but questioned whether her choice of university had influenced her netball career:

Sounds like I'm being a bit big headed, but I feel if I'd gone to Loughborough University or something like that there'd have been more opportunity so just to see if that would've been the case. But I didn't even know anything about that and I wasn't even pushed in that direction at all at school...

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Comparing the women's experiences, university netball elicited mixed responses. For Anna, who prioritised developing her economic capital, the all or nothing nature of university sports made negotiating work and sport too difficult. The lack of symbolic capital afforded to Emma in the field of university netball impacted her practice, and she concentrated on playing netball for her club. Kerry and Rebecca maintained their *habitus* towards sports participation, but they did not engage in university netball. For Hannah, university provided a route back towards netball through the logistical and financial ease it offered, with playing and socialising a positive experience. Isabella and Sam also played university netball, but the accumulation of social capital did not seem to feature as prominently as it did for Hannah. Club netball featured to a greater extent in the women's narratives and appeared to hold deeper routes and a stronger *illusio* for the women than the transient nature of university netball, as Emma, Sam, Isabella, and Hannah, also continued to play for their clubs when they returned home

at weekends and holidays. This resonates with my own experiences as, although I played netball at university, I took every opportunity to return home and play for my club where possible, feeling more 'at home' as a result of my habitus and capital aligning more strongly in the club environment.

8.3 Previous club experiences: coaches, competition and culture

Sports clubs form a significant proportion of sports participation in England (Nichols et al., 2012) and, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, similar to research by Wolman and Fraser-Thomas (2017), clubs can play a crucial role in the transition from school to club/adult sports. Sports clubs provide important spaces for individuals to develop social ties and social capital, however, the way the club is structured and its culture influences the nature of social ties that its members develop (Tacon, 2019). Prior to joining Uptown, seven of the women had played for other adult netball teams in the local area. Isabella had played for Uptown upon making the transition to adult netball as a teenager. Since her initial participation the club had undergone various transitions including name changes, coaching changes and a host of players coming and going. Isabella admitted, at times, that she had struggled to cope with these changes:

I had a bit of a wobble because suddenly all these people that I had really strong close connections with all retired at the same time and there was like no one left from the old Uptown and [...] because at that point actually friendship was far more part of netball than it probably is now, that's a really bad thing to say but just from naturally having things in common and having been a long time playing with those people so I was like I didn't want to stop playing netball but I also felt really insecure. All these people were coming into our team that's always existed and they were like taking over and making decisions and I'm the only one left over from the old team so what can I do or say?

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Although Isabella missed this social interaction and connection, she confessed that with her current life situation she would struggle to find time to invest in such friendships. Playing with friends and socialising off court had been desirable and enjoyable in the past, but it was not viable in the present, or as important, signifying how shifting lifestyles and priorities

create the multidimensional layers of female sport participation. Isabella's insight also reflects how the changing cultures at the club can cause shifts in the doxa of the field, which can lead to a player's capital and habitus no longer aligning as strongly. Likewise, the changing priorities of the players and shifts in their capital and habitus may also contribute to weaker alignment with the field.

Emma did not grow up in the local area and she played her netball as a junior and young adult in a different county. Upon leaving school Emma trained for two teams, both of which asked her to play for them:

...if probably I could go back now and pick a team I would probably pick the team playing the more competitive netball but I think when you're young you want a team where it's gonna make you feel at home and I think um the more competitive team they were a little bit younger and they had that kind of, they were nice don't get me wrong but just typical girls, they had that bitchy element to them so you'd hear them bitching about one person or the other but then they'd be going and be really friendly to them, so that's strange so they weren't overly welcoming when you first went there whereas the team that we did go with they had older members again, so older players who were very much like, they did act like your mum and so I was so shy and quiet at this point in my life...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Team culture and a sense of family played a part in Emma's choice of team because, as a quiet, young player, she opted for the more nurturing environment. This aligns with research by Forsdike et al. (2019) where players referred to a hockey club as being like a family. Although, in Forsdike et al.'s study this sense of family was more common with the older players rather than a younger player, as it is here with Emma. Later on, this team experienced a divide and again Emma was presented with a decision, whereby she chose to remain with the older players, who she termed her 'netball mums', providing further evidence of the importance of family for Emma. Due to relocation Emma was forced to leave the team and joined a Regional Division 1 team which offered a different experience:

...the short season that I played with the regional 1 team [...] and that was such a random because that's the highest standard of team I'd ever played with [...] and

they didn't train, they didn't talk netball, they didn't... literally they literally turned up, they didn't warm up, they didn't do anything like that. They turned up and they played and that was it. They didn't do anything else. And it was like if you did something wrong they'd just holler down the court at you like 'Emma fucking jump!' and I'd be like 'ok'. So, everything that they needed to say was like said on the court at the time, there wasn't any back biting or bitching, or at least I didn't experience it. [...] and it was kind of like realising that you can still play a good level of netball and still have fun with your teammates. It doesn't have to be like back biting and bitching and all that sort of stuff...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Emma relocated again (to the area local to the study) and joined Downtown Netball Club. Downtown were the largest club in the local area, with around six adult teams and several junior teams, although they could be described as a participation club compared to the performance-focused Uptown, with all teams playing in the local district league. Downtown was a big drop in standard for Emma and one of the main transitions she encountered was to overcome the shock of playing outdoors, which seemed to be a unique feature of this local area, where only regional matches were played indoors. Emma played for Downtown for two seasons, gaining the captaincy in her second season, when the coach took her aside and suggested she should be playing at regional level:

And the team I'd been playing with in [city] before I moved were a regional division 1 team and they were brilliant, but I spent a lot of time kind of on the bench and coming on at like WD. I think I played a couple of games in defence but because I didn't speak it was... it didn't work, and I can understand now why it didn't work. But I think it kind of knocked my confidence as to how good I could play really, so then she [coach] was like 'yeah you could come to Uptown because they play regional' and I was like 'I've had experience of that and it didn't go well' um so I basically said if the team I was playing for got promoted to prem then I wouldn't leave so and then when we went to prem for a season and I got a bit frustrated...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

The identification of Emma's talent by the coach and the action of directing her to a higher standard of club is indicative of research by Cronin et al. (2019) who reported how coaches often advised B2N players to engage in competition relevant to their ability and facilitated this through their knowledge of the local netball community. During Emma's time at Downtown she had gained social and cultural capital as a player in a new area, and accumulated significant symbolic capital, to the point where she was identified by the coach as someone whose capital even exceeded that required by the club.

Downtown also featured in Kerry and Rebecca's stories where, in their twenties, they joined a B2N scheme in operation there. Kerry described Downtown as *"really sociable and really lovely"* but she did acknowledge a clique within one of the teams:

So, I played for Team 3 to start with and then I think I went to 1. I never played for Team 2 but they were like... at the time they were like a clique of people that could really like have been in Team 1 or 3. They were just like really good friends so they were kind of out of the equation so you had to go from Team 3 or 4 to Team 1 straight off. So yeah, then I went to Team 1 for one, two seasons...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Rebecca, who joined Downtown slightly earlier than Kerry, had a very different experience of the B2N scheme:

... it was really hard because they'd got somebody from the first team [...] And she was supposed to be coming down to help us but all she did was just bark at us the whole game and she was 'move there' 'do this' 'do that' and I was like 'I don't really know what you want me to do' and she was trying to say too many things to us and we were all a bit like 'we've never really played in a team before against anybody else' so I think we all had a bit of a mad panic and that was kind of it really. I think everybody felt deflated and she really wasn't very helpful, and I think three of us left before Christmas that year and so they then said there was obviously something wrong. They asked everybody that was left whether it was helping them, and they said 'no'. So I went back [...] and I played with the same group of ladies but because we'd moved to a Tuesday night there were lots of people there so you didn't necessarily get to play with the team, you were playing with people who were your

sort of level and because I knew I was better than the team I was in it meant I could get something from it so it made it worthwhile for me turning up.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

The women are all operating in a series of overlapping and differing levels of field such as the field of sport, field of netball, field of the club etc. Rebecca's habitus did not correspond easily to the logic of the field at Downtown and she was not attuned with the doxa of the field. During her time at Downtown Rebecca fell pregnant and stopped playing but, on her return to netball following the birth of her son, she began to play with Kerry:

...they gave me a choice of which team I wanted to go in. [...] I didn't really enjoy playing with the other team because they were really quite bitchy and so I thought if I joined the new team I might enjoy it a bit more. And I made really lovely friends, so I was glad I made the right choice. So we started playing um and then me and Kerry did everything together, we moved up to Downtown 1 together, they put on some extra sessions for us so we did them together ... and we kind of got such a good friendship...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Social interaction and friendship have been cited as key reasons for female sport participation (Spencer-Cavaliere et al., 2015). The social capital gained from the new team, along with both Kerry and Rebecca's habitus, aligned more constructively with the field, though, sport is not static and both Kerry and Rebecca wanted to keep improving. Kerry's determination showed even at an early stage in her netball participation:

I like to get better at things [...], Downtown was really good and like we had [coach] training us for a while and she did... like I was secretary of the club for a while and I had this idea that we need to have sessions for people who want to get better so I organised those and [coach] did some training with only like 8 of us and it was so intense and like she really changed my game. And then she kind of retired and then it was like 'oh crikey if I stay here then I'll just carry on playing at this level'. Like you only get better if you're playing with people that are better than you I think.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Kerry and Rebecca's initial motives for participation were social interaction and friendship, but, in contrast to observations by Spencer-Cavaliere et al. (2015), who state that a win at all costs culture may not encourage continued participation, the limited ambitions of Downtown also failed to encourage continued participation for Rebecca, Kerry and Emma, who all transferred to Uptown. This highlights the importance that the goals of the club need to align with those of the individual. The individuals' habitus and capital need to match the logic of the field and the restructuring habitus and the desire to develop capital in these women no longer matched with the field of Downtown. This resonates with the research by Cronin et al. (2019) where B2N participants personalised their netball participation through choosing the competition intensity at which they played, considering their own individual ability and competitive ambitions to inform their choices. The friendship formed between Kerry and Rebecca also influenced their move to Uptown. Rebecca admitted that if Kerry had decided not to move then she would have stayed at Downtown. Strong ties are formed when individuals develop tight bonds, share intimate feelings, provide mutual emotional support and typically interact in more than one social context (Tacon, 2019) and the strong tie forged by Kerry and Rebecca added another layer to their netball participation.

Sam and Hannah had both enjoyed positive experiences at their previous clubs, which they had played for since being at school, however, similar to the ambitions of Kerry and Rebecca, they each wanted to experience playing at a higher level, and so transferred to Uptown. Lisa began playing netball for a local club at age 19 and continued there until the age of 26 when the club folded, and she was forced to find another club. At this stage of her netball career Lisa had ambitions to play at a higher level (in this instance regional as she was already playing county premier) and Uptown was the obvious local choice. Along with another player from her club, Lisa made the move. Abbie also played at this club, but when the club folded, she transferred to another county premier league team, but her experience was not a positive one:

I think they've all played together for years and years and have their set positions and have their set plays and where they want the ball and where they want each other to be and they're a very vocal team that shout at each other a lot and that's just the way they are. They don't mean to be unpleasant to each other but from

someone coming in its not a very pleasant environment to be around and they, I, one particular game I almost burst into tears because I was playing wing attack, pretty much hadn't had the ball all game, went forward to receive a ball and the centre turned round to me and had a go at me for being in her space, um and then two minutes later the goal attack turned around to me and told me that I should be in the other space which is where I was that I'd been told to get out of, and then five minutes later the goal defence told me off for not coming up for the ball and they're all telling me different things and they all, they all kind of click quite well because they're that way with each other all the time, but for me it just didn't work because I'm a little pansy so ...

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Abbie struggled to find her role, and failed to become fully socialised within this team, never quite conforming to their doxa. Playing for this team also presented Abbie with different challenges that affected her enjoyment:

Sometimes Sunday morning ... with the umpiring and it can get a bit catty. More so when I was playing in Prem actually than now ... I don't think it's quite as bad. But then maybe that was playing for the team that I did. They weren't very liked by any of the umpires, so you could kind of tell that during the games.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

Anna's previous adult netball experience was via a more unorthodox route and, although she had not made the transition to adult netball prior to university, and had not engaged in university sport, upon graduating Anna relocated to Spain where she rediscovered her passion for netball:

They [Spanish] had no idea what it [netball] is, they literally had no idea. But [...] it was like an English resort where we were [...] and they'd had this football tour come over one year and the guy said to me 'I'm going to do netball would you enter a team is that ok?' So, I emailed a few people, completely varied ages, everyone was working, different [...]. So we met and we set it up and we trained on Sunday morning which was really hard for a lot of people cos the Spanish lifestyle doesn't do early

mornings, um and then we started to try and get some friendlies, like we were getting one every six weeks so we weren't playing regularly really, and then this tournament once a year is really what, even now, they just aim for. The one tournament in June...

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Compared to Anna's experience in Spain, the English clubs seemed to have a different culture and, even though Kerry and Rebecca spoke fondly of their time at Downtown, they mentioned "*cliques*" and referred to "*bitchiness*". Similarly, Lisa found that some of the players at her old club were not particularly welcoming on her return from maternity leave, and, in previous teams, both Emma and Abbie experienced quite direct and vocal playing environments. Even Isabella, who had remained at Uptown throughout, referred to the issues surrounding changing personnel and the constant shifting dynamics of the club. Negative cultures involving cliques and power hierarchies, as well as individual ambitions to play at a higher level, prompted some of the women to change clubs, but never to consider withdrawing from the sport:

I'm not the kind of person to let other people stop me – whoops- so I wasn't prepared to just give it up because someone didn't particularly like me. It made no difference in how much effort I put into a game, it made a difference to how annoyed I was afterwards but not to how I actually played. So I just thought 'I need to do it' it's something for me I want to keep doing it.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

The culture of the teams also influenced the type of social ties the women were able to make, for example, the culture of Downtown appeared amenable to forming social connections and friendships and developing social capital. Research by Lusher et al. (2010) showed that cohesiveness and player hierarchies are important for sport teams and, although in this study a lack of cohesiveness appeared to impact enjoyment, it did not result in withdrawal from the sport. Instead, the women were empowered to act themselves, which often involved moving teams. Netball participation in adulthood had become ingrained within the experiences of these women and represents the formation of the

habitus. It is the durable nature of the women's attachment and *illusio* towards netball that underpins this continued participation, making the benefits outweigh any costs, such as negative social interactions.

8.4 The transition to Uptown: reservations and reputation

Of the eight women who joined Uptown in adulthood, five joined to play at a higher level and they all voiced their reservations regarding their decision to move, mainly due to Uptown's local reputation of being 'unfriendly' and 'cliquey':

I'd heard that it was quite cliquey over there and that the team is the team and you don't really stand much chance of getting on the team.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Rebecca said that the club does have a 'bitchy' reputation but doesn't know why or how? Olivia said she thinks it stems from years ago when they had a few feisty players and that it's just kind of stuck. We all laugh and reassure each other how nice we are.

Reflective Diary, 14th November 2016

Lisa admitted that if her old team had not folded then she would never have had the confidence to move to Uptown:

I think on a personal level I didn't think I was good enough to play for Uptown firsts, but I was, I know I was, but they never asked, they never actually asked or said we need some players do you want to join us, and I think that made me think that I wasn't good enough. And it wasn't until [previous club] folded and I was loyal to [previous club], I think I wouldn't want to move, that actually I think I can do this, and I did move, and I was lucky and got in straight away.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Having made the transition from Downtown to Uptown Kerry noted the key difference between the two clubs:

Yeah, it's different at Uptown. I think people go to Uptown to play netball rather than to like mess around. As in everyone's got their own friends out of netball but the

reason that they're there is to play good netball kind of thing if that makes sense. But I think a lot of people join Downtown [...] for [...] a way of making friends.

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Rebecca, like Kerry, wanted to continue to improve and play at a higher standard whereas other players at Downtown were content to stay in the local league:

... they didn't want to travel. They didn't want to waste so much of their day. And I get all the reasons, but I personally wanted to keep getting better and you can only get to a certain level playing the same teams[...] Downtown are very social. Very easy going. Just rock and roll kind of laid-back approach whereas Uptown ...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

Similarly, Sam and Hannah moved to Uptown due to their desire to play at a higher level. Sam joined Uptown 2 when it first formed a few years ago and was the only 'original' Uptown 2 player remaining. Hannah had been contemplating the move to Uptown for a few years and joined in the second season of the study:

Yes well for years and years I was hassled by quite a lot of people to join Uptown team and I sort of thought 'I can't really be bothered to go all the way over there for the training'. I was a bit concerned that it was a bit 'cliquey' because I'd sort of been, I'd played with some of them before, so I was kind of like, if you're not sort of chosen on merit then I'm not going to bother. But eventually I went over and did the training, I loved the training and played last season which wasn't that enjoyable, but it was at a higher standard which I wanted to do and that was the main aim really as I wanted to play at a different level. [...] I wanted to play regional level, that's what I wanted to do and at 35 I thought 'it's a bit late to start now but I thought I'll give it a bash!'.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Once again, Anna followed a different route, and after moving back to the UK chatted to a friend (an ex-Uptown player) about wanting to play netball again, albeit with very different reasons to the others:

I think I wanted to get back into doing something and more for the social part as well because when I moved back, all like my pals are in different places now, so I thought I should do something to try and integrate and [...] I messaged her [friend] and we had a reunion [...] and she gave me all these options - you can like do the mixed on this day and that day or the most competitive one is if you want to play on a Sunday and go to Uptown and she gave me Emma as a contact. She says just walk in and do it and I did. One day I just walked in like a rabbit in the headlights, like 'hello I can play!'

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Except for Isabella, who was already at Uptown, and Anna who was predominantly looking for a social club, the other seven women moved to Uptown with the goal of improving their own performance and playing a higher standard of netball. They all chose to move despite the reputation that Uptown had of being unfriendly, in this instance prioritising their own development and aligning their own motives with those of a performance club. As the women gained greater social and cultural capital, they began to seek out new opportunities or fields where these gains in capital and their habitus aligned with the doxa of the field. Uptown, as the main performance club in the area, presented the most logical field for the women to enter to develop their cultural capital as netballers, despite any reservations the women had they evaluated that the benefits of playing at a higher standard outweighed any costs such as unfriendliness or cliques. These reasons for transition shaped their first experiences at Uptown and their expectations of the club.

8.5 Initial impressions: the first Uptown training session

The transition to Uptown was not easy for Emma and she admitted that at her first training session she was not made to feel welcome overall, although in contradiction she found one of the players a little too friendly:

[...] I remember one of the girls who's super super friendly, [...] she's really really friendly bless her and she tried her best to get like a conversation out of me [...], but it was almost completely the wrong move because I was just like, found her really overpowering and it made me feel uncomfortable because she was literally like 'blah blah blah' and I was like so yeah... so then I went for that one session and I didn't really go back again. And at the start of the next season I thought 'no I need to try'

and I think they asked me to go and play summer league for them a few times, so I'd met a few people.

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Based upon local rumours Hannah had presumed Uptown would be unfriendly and unwelcoming, but her experience was not as expected:

Oh well it's very different to what I thought [...] Obviously there were two teams and I sort of joined, got put on Uptown 2 initially as well. Which at the time was great you know? And we all trained together, dunno... The players are so nice over there as well. It wasn't what I thought at all.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Uptown also differed greatly from Kerry's perceptions and expectations of what a performance club would be like:

...it wasn't what I expected [...] I don't really know why I thought this, but I assumed there would be a core of really good people for Uptown 2 and that we'd kind of like [...] fighting for a place kind of on the team. Then we kind of turned up and it was like 'oh you can be on the team' and I didn't feel last year we were a team at all it was just like random people that showed up for training ...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

In contrast, Anna had no knowledge of the club and the local netball scene and entered her first training session with no preconceptions:

It was scary! I was scared. I was a rabbit in the headlight. Because I didn't ask ... I should've asked [...] really 'what's the setup?' I didn't even grasp that it was two teams I just didn't get any of it. I just completely ... I didn't ask the dynamics I just walked in blind! [Laughter] And now I look back and think they must have thought 'who the hell is this person and what is she just doing turning up?'

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

As previous first team captain, and a key person in keeping Uptown functioning as a netball club, Lisa had a long-standing history with Uptown. When persuaded out of retirement to return to the club and help the second team out, Lisa attended a training session, but she did not receive the warm welcome she was expecting from the first team players:

[...] I don't know if that's maybe because they were a bit ... some people were a bit worried, maybe they thought I wanted to come back to Uptown firsts and that wasn't the case at all because I wasn't actually that bothered. So not as well as I thought considering I'd been with them such a long time and I'd helped the team progress to where they were because like I was ... well I don't know if I've told you ... but before I helped keep the team in regional and if it wasn't for me they probably would have folded, so no, but then saying that we've probably had some new players in since then as well who don't know who I am so...

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

Due to the changing dynamics of the club, Lisa had lost some of her symbolic capital previously gained, which she found difficult to come to terms with initially. All the women had slightly different expectations and experiences based upon their individual netball journeys. Compared to the women in the study my own return to netball and attending Uptown was for very different reasons, this study. However, I did share some of the women's experiences:

...I know some of the girls from playing locally and they are friendly towards me. Those who don't know me don't really make any effort to get to know me or to communicate with me but stay within their own friendship groups [...] I was quite nervous initially and worried that my standard of netball would be poor compared to others. I soon find that I'm ok in terms of my ability as there is a mix of first team and second team players there and I seem to fit in about mid-range in terms of fitness and ability, and certainly aren't out of my depth with the second team at all. This makes me feel more confident and I relax a little bit... At times throughout the session I do tend to feel socially awkward, especially when we are asked to get into pairs to work on tasks as, being 'the new girl', no one proactively volunteers to work with me as they all have their own established groups within the group [...] it has a very different vibe from other clubs I've trained with. Although people are polite and not

stand-offish, they aren't particularly warm or friendly either. There's little in the way of banter or social chat and it really is just about coming training and going home. At the end of the session people don't hang around and chat they just grab their stuff and go ...

Reflective Diary, Season One, 16th February 2016

Compared to when I played for my previous club where I held a high level of symbolic capital, I felt similar to Lisa that it was hard to be faced with many younger players who had little regard for my experience. Like Hannah's experience, there was never any discussion of which team I would train with and I was ignored by the first team and so allocated myself to the second team:

The first team seem to be quite a closed group and there's no suggestion that I should work with them. I'm not sure if that's because I'm not good enough or because they don't want any new players. It's not really discussed.

Reflective Diary, Season One, 16th February 2016

The women's first impressions of Uptown were very mixed with some finding it very competitive, others not as competitive as they thought, and for some upholding the myths of Uptown as an 'unfriendly' club and for others dispelling them. Socialisation is an ongoing process during which the individual learns to adopt the values and perspectives of the group, fulfils new roles and shapes others, often leading to a new concept of self. All nine women successfully gained acceptance and fulfilled the general values and their individual role required by the group, with some having a much smoother transition than others. Emma described how she has tried to change the perception of the club for other local netballers:

I would like to hope that it's got better but yeah there's people that you know aren't particularly friendly, but I guess you get that at every, in every team. I find it really strange because I don't think I'm particularly friendly because I just want to go in and play, I don't want to small talk with people it's not my thing. [laughter] but then because I speak to a lot of people on Facebook I tend to feel like it's me going over and going 'hi' but because I'm rubbish at small talk so all I end up doing is going over and saying 'hi, I'm Emma I spoke to you on Facebook, Ok good chat see you later!.

[Laughter] But I guess it's having that person that's actually going to say hello, so I would hope it's got a little bit friendlier

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Within a field, agents are constantly vying for power, and at Uptown this has set the rules and doxa of the club which, although Emma is trying to change it, are evident within the club structure and also between the first and second teams.

8.6 Power players: the first and second team

Over the duration of the study there were several changes at Uptown, illustrative of the constantly moving and evolving nature of club sport. During the first season Tara held the head coach position and led training weekly, although she did not attend either first or second team matches. Game day was reliant on the captains to organise and manage, bestowing additional power on those roles. During the first season the second team experienced several 'issues' leading to some dissatisfaction and disquiet within the team, with role conflict and a lack of clear leadership evident (discussed later in Section 8.7).

There was also a change in coach at the end of the first season as Tara was unable to continue. At the beginning of the second season Caroline, the junior team coach, stepped in. Caroline coached both the first and second teams at training and attended the first team home matches, as well as continuing as junior coach. The first team squad remained the same in this second season, whereas the second team saw the progression of myself and Abbie from training to playing and the arrival of Hannah and Anna. With the departure of the previous second team captain and vice-captain Rebecca was appointed captain supported by Sam as vice-captain. While these transitions between seasons altered the roles of some of the players and the introduction of new players at the club, one of the common themes that extended over both seasons was the divide between the first and second team:

It's interesting to watch as first team players come in, they stand on one side and likewise second team players stand on the other. As an observer I can start to work out the teams and squads, as well as the groups within the teams [...].

Reflective Diary, Season One, 22nd February 2016

There is a clear divide between the first and second team with little interaction between the two. The second team are clearly in awe of the first team and feel like the first team are far better players. The first team are a better collection of players, of that there is no doubt, but there are a couple of players in the second team, such as Hannah and Abbie, that could probably hold their own in the first team and if they trained with the first team regularly could play at that level too.

Reflective Diary, Season One, 21st March 2016

I'd asked Rebecca earlier if there was training next week and she wasn't sure. It made me realise that the decisions are predominantly made by the first team and then this is eventually filtered down to the second team, rather than the second team being consulted in any of the decision making.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 12th December 2016

This divide between the teams is reflective of the research by Forsdike et al. (2019) where, upon arrival at hockey training, the women went to one side or the other based on their skill level thus removing any potential for social connection. At Uptown during this pre-training ritual where the two teams took their opposing sides of the hall, the coach typically joined one group or the other, however, there were varying approaches between the two coaches. Tara often talked to Emma about netball and gravitated to the first team, whereas in the second season Caroline tended to chat socially with the second team:

I've noticed that Caroline often talks to us second team players at the start of the session rather than the first team. I wonder why? I think about the interviews that I've had with the players so far and the perceptions of the first team as 'cold' and the second team as 'warm'. I wonder if Caroline feels this too? We [second team] do always have a laugh and chat and are actually becoming quite good friends.

Reflective Diary, season Two, 13th February 2017

This change in coach did not seem to impact the divide in culture between the two teams and there remained a clear hierarchy in operation. All committee roles were held by first team players at the club, with the symbolic capital of the first team players greater than

those in the second team. Several of the women referred to the different approaches, attitudes and general atmosphere created by the first and second teams at training:

... I just walked in and I did find the first session really hard. Because I find the first team really difficult. They're not as warm. But then once I figured out like there was two teams – this team's really nice I'm going to go with these!

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Drills and practices were mostly divided into first and second teams, and at the end of training there was always a match that involved all players, sometimes with the first team playing against the second team, and often mixed teams. Playing alongside first team players was not always a positive experience for those in the second team:

[...] at one point I think the first centre she must have said 'swap' and I didn't hear her, and the ball went to the wrong person and she was like 'I said swap!' and I was like 'uh I didn't even hear, I didn't even hear – sorry!' [...] Yeah and I was like 'oh ok!' I'm not in it that competitive. I have too much stress at work to deal with that.

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

I encountered a similar experience to Anna involving the same first team player:

I feed a couple of poor balls [...] and feel she is frustrated with me and it knocks my confidence [...] Ava calls me by my position rather than my name which makes me feel completely an outsider. I've been attending training for a good few weeks now, and even introduced myself to the girls, and even then she can't remember my name. It makes me feel insignificant. Like she doesn't feel that I'm worthy enough to bother learning my name. This reinforces my feelings of being an outsider. Also, as my confidence diminishes I play even worse, which makes me feel even less confident. I don't enjoy tonight's training session at all. I feel like a rubbish player, like I don't belong and that some of the first team (specifically Ava) have no time for me. I think if I was a player looking for a new club that I probably wouldn't stay at this one. It really does have a very 'them and us' feel, with the first team seeming like they are superior to the second team. The thing is I know some of the first team and have played with a couple of them on a Thursday and Sunday evenings, but here there is

no recognition, almost like they don't want to admit to playing on the same team as a second teamer. As I drive home I consider this more and upon reflection I feel I'm overacting slightly, but some of it does resonate a little.

Reflective Diary, Season One, 31st March 2016

The first team players certainly seemed to have a very different approach and mind-set to training and several of the women referred to this competitiveness, and rivalry for positions:

I think because for them it's a lot more competitive and I recognise a couple of them from when I used to play and it's nice to see that they still play but they scared me then and they still scare me now.

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

Lisa reflected upon her time playing for Uptown 1 and explained how the competition and focus differed from the second team:

Yeah, I just don't know if it's because you're always fighting for your position, so you are in that mind-set that you're there to train and you're there to get on with it and do your best and impress the coach as well.

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

As first team captain, Emma, often found herself dealing with the emotions of players due to non-selection, when their position was threatened, or when they disagreed with coaching techniques:

I've had tears erm... which then obviously leads to me having to go and deal with that. And people disagree with your decision and it's subjective isn't it? Everybody's going to disagree or agree, everybody's going to see it differently so you know what I mean, that doesn't bother me, and I'd rather they turn round to me and say 'well I think that's wrong' to my face rather than go behind my back and start a load of discontent, you know with other people within the squad so, I've always said and I'm quite open to that if you disagree... you know you bring a GS off and they're really disappointed and you kind of have to say to them 'look at your stats' and then they're like 'we shouldn't take stats' and I'm like 'why not?' and they say 'because it doesn't

give the full picture'. Well I have had to have the conversation with our shooters this year because they hate the fact that we're taking stats and they actually feel like it puts more pressure on them, but... so the last few games we haven't done stats, but I don't think that their shooting has actually got better...

Emma, Interview, 27th March 2017

Taking statistics is a key illustration of the disparity between the first and the second team approaches and served to escalate the rivalry between first team players for selection. This first team rivalry was intensified towards the end of the second season when a new regional player attended training for the first time:

I know her [...] so I say hello and make sure she's welcome. She also knows Hannah who chats to her. The first team players don't really make a massive effort to be friendly to her. I hear [...] that certain first team players feel threatened by her arrival at the club. Again, this highlights the culture of the first team that it is very competitive, and people feel like they are fighting for a place.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 24th April 2017

In the depths of winter and also later as the season tapered off, the attendance at training dropped off, particularly first team attendance, and on one occasion there were only two first team players present, which seemed to create a very different atmosphere:

I enjoy the session tonight and I wonder whether that is due to the absence of the first teamers causing the training to have a more relaxed vibe, also because my ability level is on a par with the rest of the group? Perhaps that is what everyone else is thinking, and I wonder whether sometimes it is demoralising for the second team training with the first team due to the difference in standard, and whether it does these players any good to always feel a bit inferior? The second team struggle to attract new players and again I wonder if the training set-up is a contributing factor to this? Maybe people of the second team standard find it intimidating to come and train with a regional team? I know other clubs that have more than one team tend to train on different nights for their regional team, although looking at training attendance I don't think Uptown has enough players to do this.

Reflective Diary, Season One, 25th April 2016

Power dynamics were in operation at the club, both between the two teams and evident in the differential of power between the first and second teams. This can be viewed through symbolic violence, described by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 167) as, “the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity”. The second team appeared to accept the superiority of the first team and did not challenge this. The first team also experienced within team struggles of power, yet this was not replicated within the second team, who appeared to adopt a different set of rules or doxa and valued social capital and cohesion as the most valued aspect of their team. This supports research by Halldorsson et al. (2017) where each team had their own ‘idioculture’ (i.e. shared knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs) that all players adhered to. The data illustrated the nature of the different relationships within the teams and mirrored findings by Lusher et al. (2010) that there would be formal relations, such as between the captain and players, as well as informal relations, such as friendships, between team members, which impacts how a team operates.

8.6.1 Transitions between teams: playing for the ‘other’ team

The movement of players between the first and second teams was non-existent in the first season, with the teams treated as separate entities. Throughout the second season, with the introduction of Caroline as coach, Hannah gets ‘called up’ for the first team when they were short:

[...] you’re not quite good enough to play all the time for them but it’s nice to play and I like playing indoors and I like playing at that level as well. Um and I like playing with those guys as well [...] I always feel a massive amount of pressure when I play for them. I think because, well I always think you know that there’s some really really good players on that team and erm it makes you feel a bit under pressure to perform. I haven’t had a bad game for them yet so that’s a bonus, but I always think ‘oh god if I go and play like crap they won’t pick me again’.

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

During the second season both myself and Rebecca were also asked to play for the first team, and although I would have liked to play at the higher standard, I did not want to make the compromises required to do so:

The message is to both me and Rebecca asking if either of us could play for the first team on Saturday in an away match [...] Although I am pleased to be asked my initial reaction is that I don't want to play as it means giving up a Saturday as well as a Sunday next weekend. Haydn (my son) 'has a football match Saturday morning which I promised I would watch and after playing two games today I feel like I've had enough netball. In the past week I've played eight times when I count training and mixed league games. I re-read the text and it's asking for either me or Rebecca. I know it would mean a lot to Rebecca to play at that level and I see this as my chance to really strengthen our relationship. I reply saying that I am struggling to play on Saturday with it being an away match and the amount of time commitment and that hopefully Rebecca will be able to play for them. Rebecca then replies after me and says that she can play. I'm a bit wary as I feel like Emma has been so amenable to my research but then when she's asked me for something I've said no. I wonder if I should explain my reasoning to her – that I felt Rebecca should play instead of me?

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 29 January 2017

At training the day after their first team match Hannah and Rebecca discussed their experiences:

Hannah said she played the second half at GS and did ok. Rebecca said she made a bad pass first of all and then felt like they then didn't pass her the ball. They talked about one of the first team players and how she gives off an unsupportive vibe. I don't say anything, but I have picked up on that in training. She doesn't give the second teamers much time and if ever we mix up teams and she plays alongside a second teamer she gets very impatient with them and is often quite harsh. It doesn't sound like either of them had a particularly good experience.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 5th March 2017

Later in the season after a few more 'call-ups' Hannah reflected further upon her experiences of first team netball:

... she [Hannah] is quite disillusioned as on Sunday she travelled but didn't play. She said in the car on the way home to the other first team players that she wasn't going to bother any more if she didn't get picked or kept going all that way for a quarter or to not even get on at all. Apparently, Olivia said to her she couldn't expect to play first team if she didn't train and so Hannah said that is why she is there tonight to prove a point.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 3rd April 2017

Along with second team players 'playing up' there was also the issue of first team bench players 'playing down' to help the second team, which appeared to hold stigma for these players. During my time at the club only two players ever did this; the youngest member of the club, who was just starting out with the first team, and the oldest member of the club, coming to the end of her first team career. During the second season one of the first team bench players refused to play for Uptown 2 but, instead requested to play for Downtown in the same league. A different situation arose later in the season when the second team had ten players available for a game, including the older first team bench player, which led to some controversy:

Abbie voices that she thinks we should go with our second team squad and not use the first team bench players [...] Personally I feel that this is ok because she only gets a quarter here and there for the first team and is also committed to playing for us. Although I guess the problem is that if Uptown 2 players are dropped when Uptown 1 bench players become available this can seem unfair too.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 31st October 2016

The role of 'bench-players' appeared to be a difficult position, as they got little playing time for the first team, and the second team only really wanted them to play if short, as they too did not want to give up their own playing time. Then again, the majority of first team bench players did not want to play for the second team and from a first team player perspective Isabella admitted that she would rather stop netball than play for the second team:

No, I wouldn't go down, I'd just play mixed if I stopped. I can't play for Uptown 2 anyway because if we got demoted I'd stop straight away because I won't play every Sunday because of church [...] so even a couple of seasons ago it looked like we were

going to have to go to prem and play outside on a Sunday, and I didn't want to go and play outside as well!

Isabella, Interview, 27th June 2017

Playing outside appeared to be a big factor in the transition from regional down to county netball, and was a concern to Lisa on her return to the second team:

I've always said I wouldn't play outside ever again, but I think because the girls are so nice that helped me because I thought this was so enjoyable and it wasn't competitive for me because it's at a lower standard ...

Lisa, Interview, 12th March 2017

There seemed to be two key factors preventing first team bench players playing for the second team, first and foremost perhaps the stigma of 'playing down' and it being viewed as a reduction in their cultural capital, and secondly the issue of playing outside on slippery courts in poor weather conditions, which reduces a player's effectiveness and increases the risk of injury. The majority of second team players also had no ambitions to 'play up' and, for Hannah and Rebecca who both played for the first team, this had not always resulted in a positive experience. Similar to the B2N participants identified by Cronin et al. (2019), the women in this study wanted to personalise their netball participation through choosing the competition intensity at which they played:

...if I went into Uptown firsts, I don't think I'd want to travel all that way to play netball for an hour or so and give up as much time. Whereas I'm quite content with the amount of netball I already play at the moment so...

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

No. I wouldn't play. I don't want to. I don't want to travel on like a Saturday or a Sunday that far. That's taking up a whole day and I don't want to have to establish myself in another team I think. I'm just happy to play where I am I think.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

The data illustrates status inequality between the first and second team, resonant of Bourdieu's theories of class and power. The first team are perceived as superior as they have a higher status within the field of netball and the field of Uptown. They are more dominant, both in terms of physical playing capital and roles held within the club, and through their status they enable their distinctiveness and difference to the second team. The relationship between the first and second team can also be viewed through Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence whereby the first team act in ways that cement the status inferiority of the second team, illustrated in the preference of the first team bench players to not play at all rather than play for the second team. There are clear power dynamics at play in the first team with players competing for positions and being measured against statistics; however, the second team do not appear to have the same level of vying for power, content with their current roles within the team. The second team players seem well aligned with the doxa of the second team and their habitus and capital match the logic of the field. Most of the second team players do not strive to enter into the logic of practice adopted by the first team.

8.6.2 The first team culture

The club appeared to operate with the teams as two separate entities, simply sharing a training venue and a coach. The perception of the first team at training, was that they were not very sociable, however, upon spectating a first team home game, I saw the first team from a different perspective:

As we walked into the sports hall a few of the first team players waved and said hello and looked pleased that I had come to watch. This made me feel bad for not coming to watch previously. I noted that there were no other second team players watching but I guess that weekends are precious to people and playing is their first passion rather than watching.

After the final whistle Zoe who had been sub the second half came over and spoke to me [...] Then Sophia [...] came over and said "thanks for coming to watch Jess" [...] Olivia also said thanks for watching. This positive reception made me feel even more part of the club than I do at training and Uptown 2 matches. I noticed that there was food in the reception area where they stay to have a buffet with the opposition

afterwards. So, although my perception was that Uptown 1 aren't very sociable, they are within their team, and this social time following a match is when they get to relax and chat to each other.

When I got home I had a message on my phone from Emma to say "thanks for watching today". I replied that I had really enjoyed it and thought they played well, and she responded that it was one of their better days. Again, this proactive contact from Emma made me feel welcome as part of the club.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 7th January 2017

This interaction suggested that support worked both ways and perhaps if the first team perceived the second team players as not supporting them, then in return, they were less inclined to show their support, including bench players playing down. Therefore, dynamics and hierarchy and power are at play in the possible perception by the first team that the second team are not fulfilling the social and cultural capital required to be part of a regional level club, by supporting them. This relates to the theoretical concept of 'othering', whereby both teams view one another as unlike them, resulting in an 'us v them' relationship.

8.7 Friendships, cliques and hierarchies: the changing culture of the second team

At the end of the first season the captain and vice-captain of the second team left the club. There had been unrest within the second team and role conflicts occurred where both individuals encountered criticism from the team, which appeared to lead to ostracism from the group. In interviews, the players who were part of the second team in the first season reflected upon how the team had changed:

I didn't feel last year we were a team at all it was just like random people that showed up for training [...] There was no direction and with lots of new people and a new team you need someone to be like 'this is what we're going to do, this is how we're going to do it' [...] And it was also frustrating because I think we had the potential to beat some of those teams but maybe the wrong decisions were made about who was playing where...

Kerry, Interview, 8th November 2016

Sam admitted that when returning to the second team following the birth of her son, she had been apprehensive as she had been aware of the difficulties within the team:

[...] after the game I saw loads of messages, because I was still in the group, because [vice-captain] caused quite a lot of controversy I think. So, I was a bit apprehensive about playing because I saw those before I played. And they were all having an argument.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

During her first season at Uptown Rebecca had a difficult transition and experienced problems with the vice-captain:

... I wasn't allowed to play in the 'D' because somebody said that wasn't allowed. Because I knew I was a defender and I knew I was a really good defender, but they played somebody else who wasn't quite as good ...

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

My own observations in the first season noted that during training Tara spent less time with the second team, which created quite a disorganised environment and one where the captain liked to talk the assigned drills through at length:

I notice that tonight the coach spends more time with the first team and I wonder if that's because they have a big game coming up. From an objective viewpoint she does seem to spend more time with them generally and the second team kind of manage themselves, although not particularly well!

Reflective Diary, Season One, 7th March 2016

At times in the first season I found myself wishing I was able to train with the first team:

As I look over at the first team, I can see a clear difference in the way they operate. The first team are far more 'action' and less talking, I kind of wish I was in that group!

Reflective Diary, Season One, 29th February 2016

When Caroline took over as coach, and under Rebecca's captaincy, alongside a more consistent team, including the addition of myself, Abbie and Anna, there appeared to be more stability and more direction in the second team for the 2016-17 season:

... Caroline divides her time equally between the two groups, showing no favouritism. In fact, she commends us second team players and says, "you could teach them a thing or two down there!". The second team players seem more focused than last year – perhaps a reflection of the more directed and organised training sessions.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 5th September 2016

Caroline asks me and Abbie a few questions about our team and says she feels the second team have a much better attitude than the first team. She feels exasperated that the first team hardly ever have the same team available and she says, "I don't think we've ever played the same seven players twice"

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 31st October 2016

Rebecca was a strong character and her leadership created a new team culture for the second team:

...because of playing last season where it was very much like 'we've got these wacky ideas let's give it a try' and the rest of the team being like 'no, what have you even done'. Like we lost games because of stupid decisions that should never have been made. And I've always kind of thought that everyone has a role within the team and if you've got somebody barking orders at you that's never going to work. I think everyone should be treated as an equal, so everybody needs to have their opinion heard. And I think we're lucky enough to be in a team where we can kind of help each other.

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

This new culture at play in the second team provided a positive experience for the players, despite now playing back in the local district league:

I'm a bit disappointed that we got moved down, but you know we've sorted the team out a little bit more now, it didn't work as it was last year, we couldn't compete over there....

Hannah, Interview, 9th October 2016

Well I think we're really getting to grips with each other as a team its working really well and you can tell that we're training more and more and every match we play I think we do play better together and knowing where each other are.

Abbie, Interview, 11th October 2016

But yeah it's really good – I think the atmosphere's really nice, it's always the right level of we want to win but not too pushy. It's a nice Sunday morning – we all wanna win but if we don't win it's not ... it's not like 'you played rubbish' it's nice!

Anna, Interview, 9th January 2017

I think everyone seems to have just sort of gelled better. There seems to be a lot more motivation but that's obviously because we're winning as well, cos it's hard when you do lose all the time.

Sam, Interview, 16th January 2017

Social connections, power and hierarchy are all part of team sport and it is likely that the two second team players (the captain and vice-captain) that left in the first season were perhaps influenced by a shift of power and hierarchy, which resulted from new players joining the squad. Unlike the findings reported by Halldorsson et al. (2017), where the team maintained a united front, the behaviours of the second team were not kept 'backstage' which lead to a club meeting to discuss the issues. Although the second team resumed after this meeting at the end of the season the captain and vice-captain left the club. The captain continued to play hockey, which was her main sport, and the vice-captain continued to play local mixed netball, therefore, although they both left the club, they did not stop playing sport. This illustrates the importance of the individual's habitus aligning with the doxa of the field and that when these are not in harmony people may seek to leave the field. However,

if an individual's habitus towards sports participation is strong then they do not withdraw from sport but simply find a more suitable field for their habitus and capital.

The findings resonate with Forsdike et al.'s (2019) study and illustrate the dynamic, ever-changing environments of sports clubs that the members are continuously responding and reacting to. The second season elicited a much more positive response from second team players, and this was attributed to greater consistency of players and the commitment of these players to attend training regularly, which made the team feel more stable. The difference in coaching style, although not referred to by the players, may also have contributed to this more focused and content second team, whereby positions and power were accepted and not contested. The new team culture replicated findings by Halldorsson et al. (2017) as it functioned as coordinating individuals, where individual agency led to Rebecca and Sam taking on leadership roles. This change in culture also seemed to be reflected in social gatherings, where the second team were very relaxed in one another's company.

8.8 Club socials

During my time at the club there were several social gatherings arranged, however, I was only 'invited' to attend the socials during the second season once I became a committed second team player. The first social gathering I was invited to was arranged at the beginning of the second season and took the form of a picnic in the park, but this was not well attended and did not last more than a couple of hours. Rebecca commented on the club's lack of social activity, which seemed strange to her coming from a socially active club such as Downtown:

As a club they know that they're not very social. Like that rounder's thing – nobody turns up! And they've said 'oh we really want to get doing stuff' so me and Kerry are supposed to be the social secretaries for this season, but they do things themselves Uptown 1. Well they've arranged things I don't know if they've actually gone ahead and done them. But I know...because they have their own like little tea party after a game they are a bit more social in terms of being a team but not being a club.

I think people want to be more social but nobody's prepared to arrange something and then when you do try and arrange something nobody gets back to you!

Rebecca, Interview, 16th November 2016

This suggests that for many players developing social connections away from netball was not a priority. There was typically an annual Christmas event and this year the Christmas outing, an hour at a local trampoline park followed by a meal, was arranged for January, when players were likely to have more social time available. This was well attended with six second team players and six first team players. The second team players left the trampoline park and drove to the restaurant in convoy:

We are the first to reach the restaurant and there are two tables set out. We sit on one and one of the first team players comes in and sits with us. However as everyone arrives it becomes clear there is a first team table and a second team table and so the first team player apologises but moves onto the first team table.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 21st January 2017

It was a good night and although it was still very much structured in terms of two separate teams, we as a second team had fun together and developed our relationships with one another further.

The next social event was the end of season social. This was very different to what I have experienced at other clubs. Typically, I was used to the whole club meeting out at a pub somewhere, a meal and a few social drinks together. At Uptown this was a much quieter and more 'select' affair, held at one of the first team player's houses, with selective invitations issued:

Tonight is the end of season social and awards evening at Zoe's house. She has set up a separate group message to invite only those that have been part of the team's this year. It is to be held at her house, so she is the main organiser although I'm not sure if she's had help from the two captain's or coach. It's interesting that the newer players haven't been invited as one would think that a social event is the best way to get to know people and build relationships – I wonder if it's just the fact that it's at someone's house, so they need to be mindful of space or whether it's an intentional

move to only invite those that have played regularly. They didn't even invite Lisa who has played our last few games, and Evie who has been training with us all season. In total 16 people were 'invited'. Again, it's that clique that emerges at times like this that suggests some aren't considered part of the team. It's also an interesting choice to have it at someone's house rather than like the previous social where we went to Bounce and then a pizza. Perhaps this is so that cost isn't a factor for people?

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 12th May 2017

The selective and intimate nature of this event appeared to reinforce the hierarchy of those players at the club, with invitations extending only to those considered as holding the desired level of symbolic capital invited. Due to the power dynamics at play at Uptown the developments of social capital were more readily available to those with the desirable level of cultural capital. There was a social element to the club, but this was minimal compared to other clubs I have played for and appeared to contrast with the other local netball club; Downtown. When social activities were organised at Uptown attendance was minimal, and it appeared to attract more second team players, perhaps due to the higher emphasis placed on social capital by the second team. This is reflective of the reason's players join Uptown, to improve their netball performance and level of competition, and the social connections and friendships come second to this.

8.9 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has discussed the experiences of the women as adults in the field of netball. The women all followed various routes into how they became members of Uptown Netball Club, however, there were common themes emerging such as a desire to improve their own netball performance and play at a higher level. What was apparent from all nine women was the requirement of their capital and habitus to match the logic of practice within the field. In instances where these were not aligned, such as the women accumulating capital that exceeded the field, the women took action to relocate to a more suitable field, typically through changing clubs. This provides evidence for the durable nature of the habitus drawing the women towards sports participation, namely netball, but also evidence of how the habitus responds when shifts occur within the field, thus providing an illustration of the structured and structuring nature of habitus.

Cliques and power hierarchies featured heavily in the women's narratives of adult netball, but there appeared to be little negative impact on participation, as the women either resolved such issues or relocated. There is a clear hierarchy at Uptown evident in the dominance and distinctiveness shown by the first team, creating an unequal order and structure within the club that is reflective of wider society. Within Uptown, the hierarchies and power and dominance at play were evident, particularly between the first and second teams. The netball ambition of the women seemed to impact the nature of the team dynamics with each team adopting their own culture. The culture of the first team was reflective of the symbolic capital of the first team players and the continuous competition for positions and court time. A clear distinction is evident in the more relaxed and social culture of the second team, and for the most part these diverse cultures suited the individuals in each team and aligned with their own personal preferences. Regardless of these distinct cultures, Uptown, as a field, provided the nine women with a sense of community, a social space suited to their habitus, a combination of their past and present circumstances, their accumulation of capital, and their position in the field.

Chapter 9: Under one's skin: the depths of sport participation

9.1 Introduction

Increasing sports participation remains high on the government agenda, and with the pandemic reportedly having a greater negative impact on women's sport compared to male sport (Pape and McLachlan, 2020), supporting female sports participation, and closing the gender gap is more important than ever. Although everyone faces constraints to sport participation throughout their lives, women often face additional layers of complexity compared to men that they must negotiate and navigate (Wood and Danylchuk, 2012). This research has studied the lives of nine women to explore what constraints towards sport participation they have faced and how they have overcome such barriers to participate in the team sport of netball during adulthood. This chapter draws conclusions from the evidence and discussion presented throughout this study. First and foremost, the research aims are restated alongside a brief summary of the research findings. The chapter then moves on to address the contributions of the findings to the field of female sports participation and the implications of the findings. The impact of the research on both myself and the participants is considered before discussing the limitations of the study and future recommendations for research.

9.2 Addressing the research questions

This study has investigated how past and present experiences shape the women's sport participation, critically evaluating the relationship between their childhood experiences and adult experiences, the way in which the women negotiated their netball participation over the duration of this study, how much was in their power to negotiate netball around other aspects of their lives, and the meaning of their participation, with a view of how their childhood experiences of sport contributed to this meaning and negotiation. The study has therefore addressed all three research aims to consider:

1. The opportunities and support the women received throughout their childhood to be physically active and to participate in sport.
2. How and why the women negotiate their adult netball participation around other aspects of their lives.
3. The women's lived experiences of playing recreational club netball.

The findings identified that an active childhood was a strong commonality between all nine women, as was growing up in a two-parent biological family with siblings, and one that valued sport participation. The women all engaged in a combination of informal and formal activities throughout their childhood and sampled a range of organised club sports, as well as engaging in school PE and school sports teams. Parents were the key distributors of economic, social, and cultural capital and provided opportunities and support for the women to participate in sport. Siblings provided further socialisation experiences and exposure to various sports through their own sport participation. PE teachers also used their social and cultural capital to encourage some of the women to participate in club sport, as well as selecting players for performance pathways. Although there were commonalities between the women's childhood experiences there were also nuances of each individual's story, suggesting that rather than one singular pathway childhood sport experiences are a result of three overarching influences (as shown in Figure 9.1).

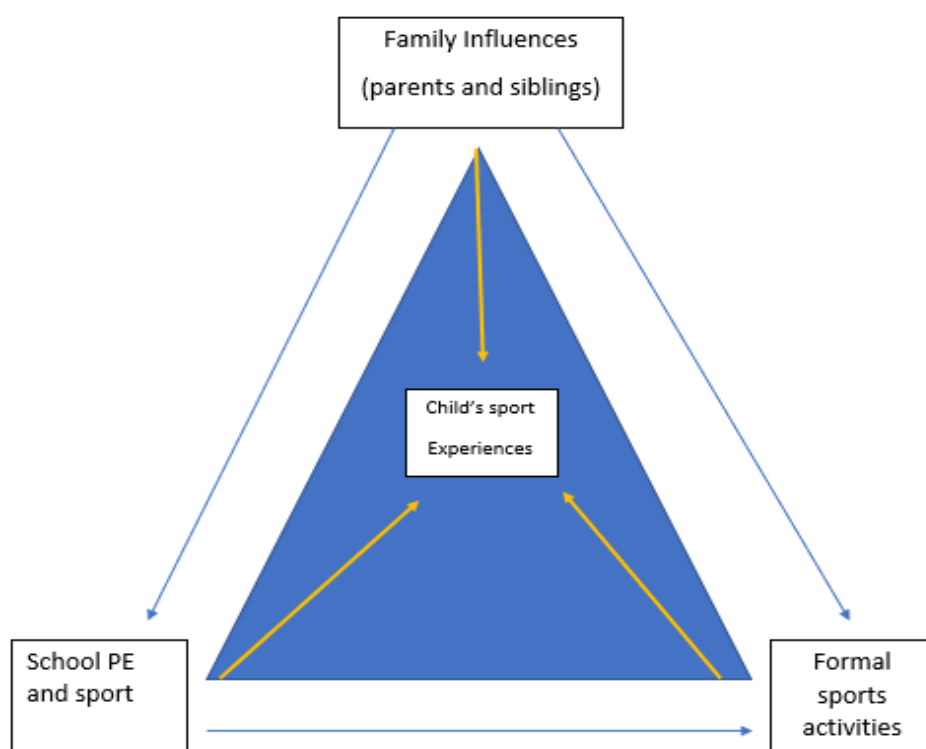


FIGURE 9.1 KEY INFLUENCES OF CHILDHOOD SPORT EXPERIENCES

The support provided by the family and the distribution of capital to allow participation in formal sports opportunities, alongside informal family activities often involving siblings, appeared the most prominent influence for the women in this study. This did not, however, occur in isolation but together with PE and school sports experiences, which for some provided the route into club sport. While Dagkas and Quarmby (2015) suggested that the interconnecting fields of family, schooling and peer culture influence an individual's physical activity choices, peer culture was not something that the women voiced as an influence, although, this may have formed part of their school or formal sport experiences. Data presented throughout Chapter 6 provided evidence for the formation of a habitus towards sport participation during childhood, supporting research by Strandbu et al. (2020) that a family culture of sport participation during childhood can be explained by applying Bourdieu's theory of habitus.

This study suggests that the formation of a habitus towards sport participation has a lasting socialisation effect into adulthood that is demonstrated in the way the women negotiated their netball participation as adults. The women all lead busy lives, with work and family placing constraints on their leisure time, which required intricate navigation to maintain their participation. Indicative of their habitus towards sport participation the women all enjoyed being active and valued the benefits to both their physical and mental well-being. Netball was not the only sporting hobby for many of the women, but it was typically prioritised and a protected pursuit within their leisure time. The attractiveness of netball above other activities was attributed to the sense of community and commitment achieved through being part of a team, as well as the competitiveness of match play. The women controlled their participation to suit their lifestyle, through both the level of netball they played at and the amount of netball they committed to, although the latter was often negotiated with partners. For those women in the study who were mothers, social support was the most significant factor facilitating their netball participation, and this typically came from their partner or spouse, and their parents. Financial considerations did not feature strongly for this group of women, with some valuing their netball participation over gaining secondary incomes.

Through childhood and into adulthood the women had all experienced different journeys to arrive at Uptown and entered the club with differing levels of cultural and social capital within the field of netball. Netball clubs, and even the teams that operate within them, all have their own set of rules, or doxa, that create the culture and power dynamics at play. Over their lives the women had played netball for various teams and clubs which exhibited different cultures. These experiences allowed the women to develop their own preferences and tastes in relation to netball participation and choose the specific field of netball accordingly, to align with their habitus and capital. Though, as the data illustrates, sport participation is not static, and the women reported changes in their tastes as their capital developed. These gains in cultural and social capital typically afforded them agency as a netballer to seek out more appropriate netball fields that better aligned with their capital and habitus. Even within Uptown, as a club, the first and second team operated different cultures and doxa that the women were socialised in to, often making transition between the two teams difficult.

Overall, the findings from the data encompassed into the three overarching themes, demonstrated that the women developed a habitus towards sport participation during their childhood, which proved durable and shaped their negotiation of sport as an adult. Although the women's habitus towards sport participation was durable, the dynamic nature of sport participation required a certain amount of flexibility to ensure that the women's habitus, capital and field remained aligned. The summary of these findings is illustrated in Figure 9.2 below.

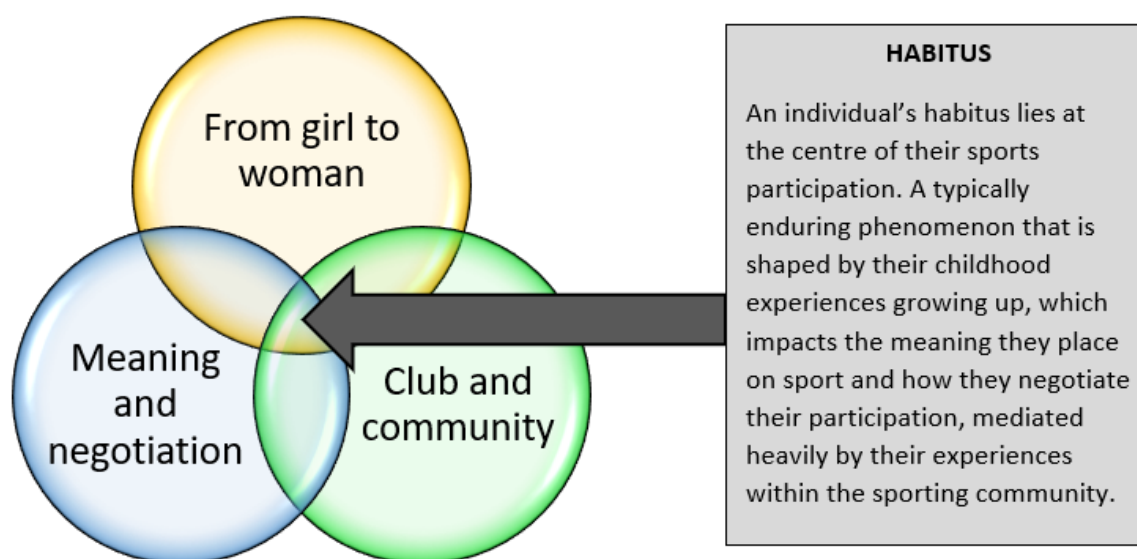


FIGURE 9.2 THE INFLUENCES ON AN INDIVIDUAL'S HABITUS

9.3 Contributions of the findings

The data presented in this study provides support for the creation of a habitus towards sport participation during childhood, which confirms similar findings by Wheeler (2012). The results also align with those of Tammelin et al. (2005), Scheerder et al. (2006) and Birchwood et al. (2008) who all produced evidence to indicate that being physically active during childhood plays a critical role in physical activity in later life. Furthermore, this study enhances the work of Haycock and Smith (2014), who suggested that children inherited a sports habitus and values from their parents that contributed to a high level of sport participation in adulthood, through the exploration of the nature of the habitus and how this is demonstrated in adulthood. Following the directions of Engström (2008) this study conducted a deeper qualitative investigation exploring the habitus and sport participation of individuals and applied this to the specific underexplored context of female recreational netball. As Strandbu et al. (2020) pointed out, gender is an important consideration when researching the role of the family and sport participation rates, particularly from early to late teenage years.

Understanding the consequences of childhood experiences on adult participation in sport is a complex picture steeped in different layers of influence and intra-family relationships. The

data presented suggested that the women were determined by their class position and socialisation as a child. This concurs with previous research by Wheeler and Green (2019) that middle class children are more likely to be physically active, as a result of the perception by middle-class parents that the provision and support of sports activities forms part of good parenting. All nine women developed a habitus towards sport participation throughout their childhood, predominantly via influences from family, but also through school and other socialising agents. Nevertheless, even within a narrow social class strata differences emerged, suggesting that the notion of habitus is not as simple as working-class, middle-class and upper-class and that even within a class it is complex and differentiated. Intra-class formation of habitus is complex and at the granular level of the individual everyone has their own story to tell. Not everybody in a class stratum forms their habitus in same way.

The active nature of the women's childhood experiences transcended into a mindset that being active was a positive aspect of life, for both physical and mental health. The meaning and priority placed on being active contributed to their effort to negotiate any constraints to enable their participation. This resonates with the view from Maton (2014) that an individual's habitus is structured by their past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and school experiences, as well as structuring through shaping a person's current and future practices. The women identified common features such as social support, financial resources and enjoyment as being at the forefront of their participation, although the complex and constantly negotiated reality of life held unique features for each of the women in this study. The women's involvement in sport and physical activity was integral to their lives and to their identities, creating an *illusio* that linked the women's habitus to their practice in the wider field of sport participation. Bourdieu's theories have been critiqued at being overly deterministic with questions arising as to whether an individual has the agency to change cultural habits and tastes (Engström, 2008). Sport participation, and as an adult netball participation, was a constant in the lives of the women. Despite the transitions faced during adulthood such as university, working life, getting married and having children, their childhood habitus had a significant determining factor on their adult participation. Although a habitus towards sport participation was evident and durable throughout the women's lives, the dynamic nature of real life and sport presented times whereby certain social

spaces the women occupied did not align with their habitus and capital. Such findings further inform the discussion over the durability of habitus and concur with the statement by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 133) that habitus is “durable but not eternal!”. As an individual has new experiences, the structure of the habitus is either reinforced or modified. Aligning with the views of Brown (2005) that habitus is reconditioned as a result of new understanding derived from their interaction with the social world, the women in this study have, at times, had to recondition their habitus towards sport participation to react to transformations and shifts from their own interactions.

This study has also responded to the need identified by Forsdike et al. (2019) for more studies within the field of sport and social capital research, specifically more studies within women’s sport participation. The women had experienced a variety of social networks during their netball journey and where some were able to develop trust and cooperation within a group, others were not. In cases where the social network was not beneficial in gaining social capital the women were empowered to leave the field and enter another field that was more suited to their needs. The trust and relationships within the second team during the first season did not benefit the group, however, in the second season the social capital gained was much higher and the team profited from this. Though the data showed that, as the women developed their cultural capital in the field of netball, this became a greater priority than developing their social or economic capital.

Bourdieu’s theory provided an effective framework to link the women’s stories from childhood through to adulthood. However, one thing that Bourdieu’s work does not quite cover is the agency these women demonstrate in negotiating their participation. Bourdieu’s work argues that the female-gendered habitus is submissive to the symbolic violence it endures rendering it largely inactive, this fails to explain how women develop agency to gain new positions within a field (McSharry, 2017). The capital these women have developed both from their family influences, school influences and their own life experiences helps to explain their agency, such as university education, professional jobs, SES etc. Netball as a wider field is an example whereby women have demonstrated agency with the growing popularity of the sport and the success of grassroots netball throughout the UK. Transforming the sport over the years to dispel the myth of a gentle non-contact sport to

one which values speed, power, and assertiveness and a willingness and determination to contest the ball. More visible role models and netball as a career are among some of the key transitions. This study has also taken place in a time where there is a changing balance of power between men and women, in a society where it is becoming more acceptable for women to express their choices than it was in the past. The women in this study are less likely to experience the degree of symbolic violence than women in previous generations. They have the ability to negotiate and find time to play netball and, as such, the 'violence' of unequal relationships between men and women is not as pronounced as it may have been for their mothers or grandmothers. The development of netball as a sport also demonstrates this change in society, with TV deals, role models and the increase in participation figures.

9.4 Implications of the findings

The structured and structuring nature of habitus permitted a view of how the women's previous experiences collided with their current situation to drive their practice. This knowledge permits a wider sociological lens through which to view sports participation whereby individuals do not follow identical paths but still arrive at the same destination. Therefore, the general principles of Bourdieu's theory of practice can help to shape knowledge of sports participation for girls and women. Childhood socialisation and continued involvement in sport and physical activity is a fundamental component of keeping girls and women involved in sport. Parents do not need to be active themselves but to encourage a habitus towards sport participation, indeed, it is important that parents value and support their children in sport participation. The habitus formed during childhood is durable, and although life changes may alter the shape of this habitus slightly, they do not appear powerful enough to override it. Once sport gets underneath one's skin, the social and cultural capital gained from such social connections and physical embodiment, creates an *illusio* between the habitus and the field. This provides the attachment and the investment in a sport that remains throughout one's life and even passed on to the next generation.

9.5 Leaving footprints

Conducting an ethnographic study was a daunting prospect, and over the duration of the study I was able to develop my skills as a researcher. This enabled me to form better relationships within the team and develop friendships, however, similar to the issues experienced by Ortiz (2004) the skills, techniques, and strategies that had been crucial in building these relationships to gather data also made it difficult for me to leave the field. As Bloor and Wood (2006) discussed, a researcher's departure from the field needs to be carefully managed:

I'm not sure I could play in a team where I felt I didn't get on with people or didn't have genuine friendships. That's something that has struck me about my exit strategy - these people have become my friends. Can I keep them as friends? Can I come to some training sessions next season? I have said I will help them out if they are short, so I guess I won't be severing all ties immediately. It will be interesting though to see how it pans out.

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 24 April 2017

It had been an emotional journey with the second team and, after they were demoted in the first season, we had now won the league, gaining promotion back to the county premier league, and I had received the 'captain's player of the season' award. There was pressure on me from the players to stay the following season to support them in the higher league. I had genuinely enjoyed my time at the club, and I had mixed emotions about leaving:

As I rifle through my drawer to get my training kit, I come across my match dress that the club loaned me for the season. I really should return it. I put it on the floor ready to take back tonight, but then at the last minute decide not to take it. Maybe I'll need it if I help them out next season? For some reason I'm reluctant to return the dress as if this will somehow negate the part I've played in the promotion this season. Or is it that I like the identity of being part of Uptown Netball Club and have become so immersed within the club and its culture that it has become part of me also?

Reflective Diary, Season Two, 8 May 2017

In the season immediately after my departure I was asked to play occasionally and received invitations to social events although this became less and less frequent with my mark on the club now faded. I have followed the progress of the second team and currently they have managed to survive relegation and have remained in the county league although, due to pregnancy, injury and players changing clubs, the squad is slightly different. Now several years on from exiting the field I keep in touch with some of the players. At times I miss being part of the club and still feel a sense of attachment. As Bloor and Wood (2006, p. 112) point out “by and large, it is the ethnographer, with his or her heightened sensitivity to fieldwork relationships, who is more likely to feel distress on separation”.

9.6 Limitations of the study and future research recommendations

Detailed studies such as this complement broad brushed theoretical approaches as people have complex lives and making sense of this complexity helps to develop theories that better understand this. Furthermore, as advocated by Braun et al. (2019), the accumulation of many small-scale studies that explore the same subject area can begin to provide greater breadth. However, no study comes without its limitations. It would appear that one of the strengths of this study, demonstrating differences within one social strata, may also be perceived as a limitation. All nine women came from middle-class backgrounds and therefore, although SES varied within this stratum, growing up there were resources available that may not be present for others. In addition, the resources available to the women throughout their adult lives also afforded them resources and capital that others may not have the luxury to draw upon, including educational capital, with seven of the women attending university. Expanding the sample to other groups of varying SES may help to provide even more detailed data on female sports participation, as would expanding the geographical area and the ethnicities of the participants.

The timeline of this research is retrospective, which always produces questions regarding accuracy of recall, with only the women’s stories available in regard to their childhood experiences. Although the subjective meaning of such narratives can often provide additional layers of meaning, studies interviewing siblings and parents may also add wider perspectives on the narratives. Rather than retrospective studies a longitudinal study of girls as they transition into adulthood would be beneficial to compare and contrast such findings.

Furthermore, those women whose life trajectory creates vast transitions between strata may also provide additional data.

The sociocultural factors that influence female participation in recreational netball identified within this study are worthy of further exploration to inform participation initiatives across England. For example, the creation of a habitus towards sport during childhood illustrates the benefits of children being active and taking part in sport at a young age, culminating in an *illusio* that drives the individual to negotiate any constraints to maintain their participation. Parental support and encouragement are a key component in engaging young children in sport and within the context of netball parental involvement would benefit from further examination. The importance of PE teachers identified by some participants in aiding the transition to club netball indicates the value of forging positive relationships between local netball clubs and schools. Those players who transitioned to club netball at a young age showed an affinity towards their club that drove their participation, such as coming home from University to play. This suggests that club culture and community have a role to play in maintaining participation. At present, the sociological stance of netball is relatively underexplored within England and more extensive investigation is required as the sport continues to grow and develop.

9.7 Chapter Conclusion

This study was undertaken to contribute to research that addresses the disparity between male and female sport participation in the UK and to advance the knowledge and understanding that may help to encourage more girls and women to be active. As previously acknowledged, present research into recreational female sport is limited and this thesis has contributed to this area of research by providing an in-depth view of the lives of nine women who have successfully navigated their netball participation into adulthood to play recreational netball for a club in the East of England. The narratives of these women, alongside my own observations as the researcher, have illustrated connections between childhood and adult experiences of sport, provided detailed accounts of how the women negotiated their netball participation around other aspects of their lives, and presented a

unique insight into how the culture and community of a recreational netball club can impact participation.

The findings from this study demonstrate the durability of the habitus that individuals embody. The formation of the habitus in the women's childhood has endured into adulthood and persists as a significant influence on their lives, perhaps even a determining influence. Subtle changes in the behaviour and dispositions of the women are evident, as they have become adults and entered into different stages of their lives, such as becoming parents, but they cannot escape the structuring influence of their childhood, and arguably the durability and persistence of the habitus that reproduces the structure of society over time. At times the habitus of the women causes friction and tension in their relationships and, because they have the desire and passion to continue playing, it is the foundation of the requirement to negotiate time for netball. Through the women's accounts of their lives this study has made an original contribution to research that can help to further shape and encourage female sports participation into adulthood.

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Appendix A – Participant Information

Pseudonym	Age *	U1 or U2	Married	Children	FT/PT work	Ethnic Origin	University educated
Abbie	26	U2	No	No	FT	White British	No
Anna	25	U2	No	No	FT	White British	Yes
Emma	35	U1	Yes	1	FT	White British	Yes
Hannah	35	U2	No	No	FT	White British	Yes
Isabella	38	U1	Yes	3	FT	White British	Yes
Kerry	29	U2	Yes	pregnant	FT	White British	Yes
Lisa	35	U2	Yes	2	FT	White British	No
Rebecca	31	U2	Yes	2	PT	White British	Yes
Sam	30	U2	Yes	1	PT	White British	Yes

*As the ethnography was completed over two seasons the age and number of children stated is the age at the time of each participant's interview

Appendix B - Semi-structured interview Guide

Introduce myself and the aim of the interview

1. Personal and lifestyle information

- First of all, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- Probes
 - Can you describe what would be a typical week for you?
 - So tell me a little more about your job (hours/travelling/level of responsibility etc.)
 - How do you feel about your work?
 - What are your future career aspirations?
 - How long have you worked there?
 - Tell me about your hobbies and interests
 - Can you tell me a little bit more about your husband/wife/partner?
 - Tell me about your children
 - Describe how you like to spend your spare time

2. Netball

Moving on to your netball participation...

- Can you draw/sketch/chart your netball participation on this timeline from a child until now
- Can you talk me through your drawing?
 - Ask prompting questions surrounding peaks/troughs/gaps etc.
- What does netball mean to you?
 - Probes
 - Why do you play netball?
 - Tell me about your current levels of netball participation
 - How important is netball to you?
 - How much time a week do you spend playing or associated with netball?
 - Tell me how you started playing at this club
 - Describe your relationships with the other players at the club / in the team
 - Does netball impact the social choices you make?
 - Do you ever consider what it costs to play netball?

Now taking you back in time...

Tell me more about your experiences of netball as a child and growing up

- Probes
 - Primary School netball / secondary school netball / club netball / university netball?
 - Were there any particular people that you feel influenced your netball?
 - Can you give more detail on your first experiences of netball?
 - Tell me about your first netball club outside of school

3. Family

Moving on to your own family when you were growing up...

- Can you tell me about your family/household when you were a child and then growing up?
 - Probes
 - Describe your family as they were when you were a child
 - Tell me about your parents and their work/interests?
 - Tell me about your siblings and your relationship with them
 - How did you spend your free time as a child?
 - How did you spend your family time?

4. Lifestyle and Netball

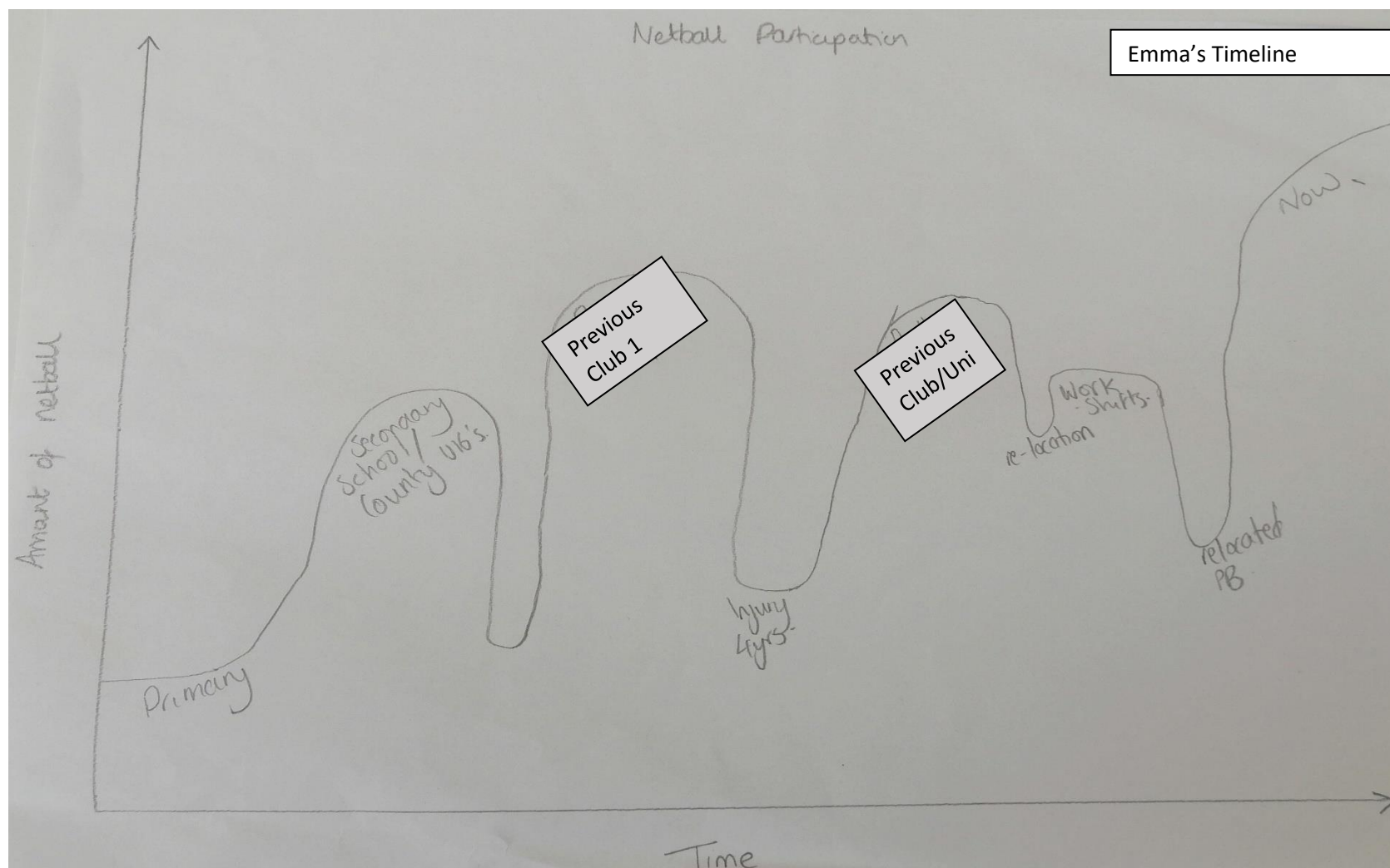
- Tell me about your netball participation and how this fits in/and/or around other aspects of your life
 - Probes
 - How does netball fit in to your typical week?
 - How do you think your husband/partner/wife feel about your netball participation?
 - What do you children think about you playing netball
 - How do you see your netball future – do you have any aspirations?

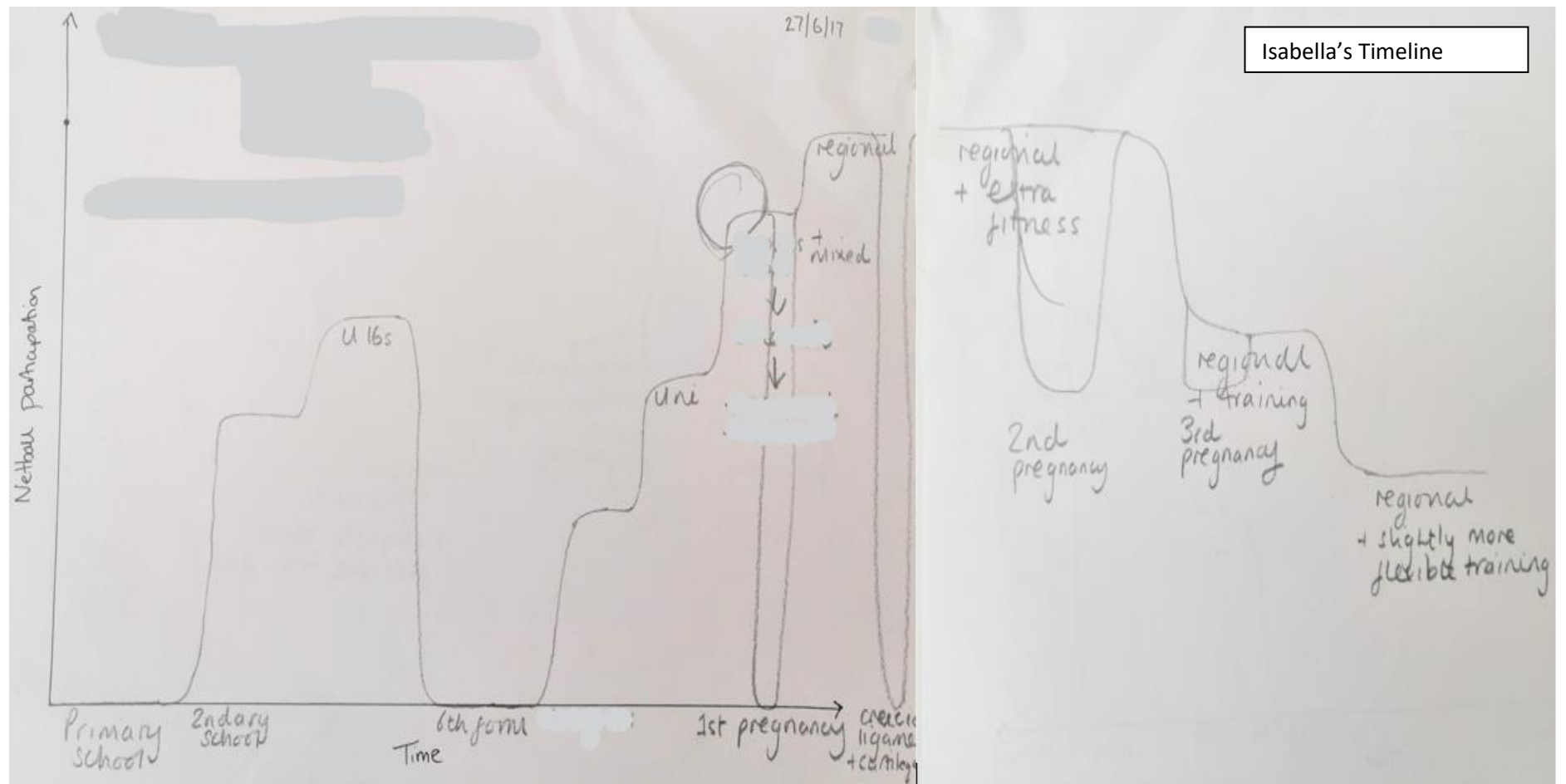
5. Thank you for your time.

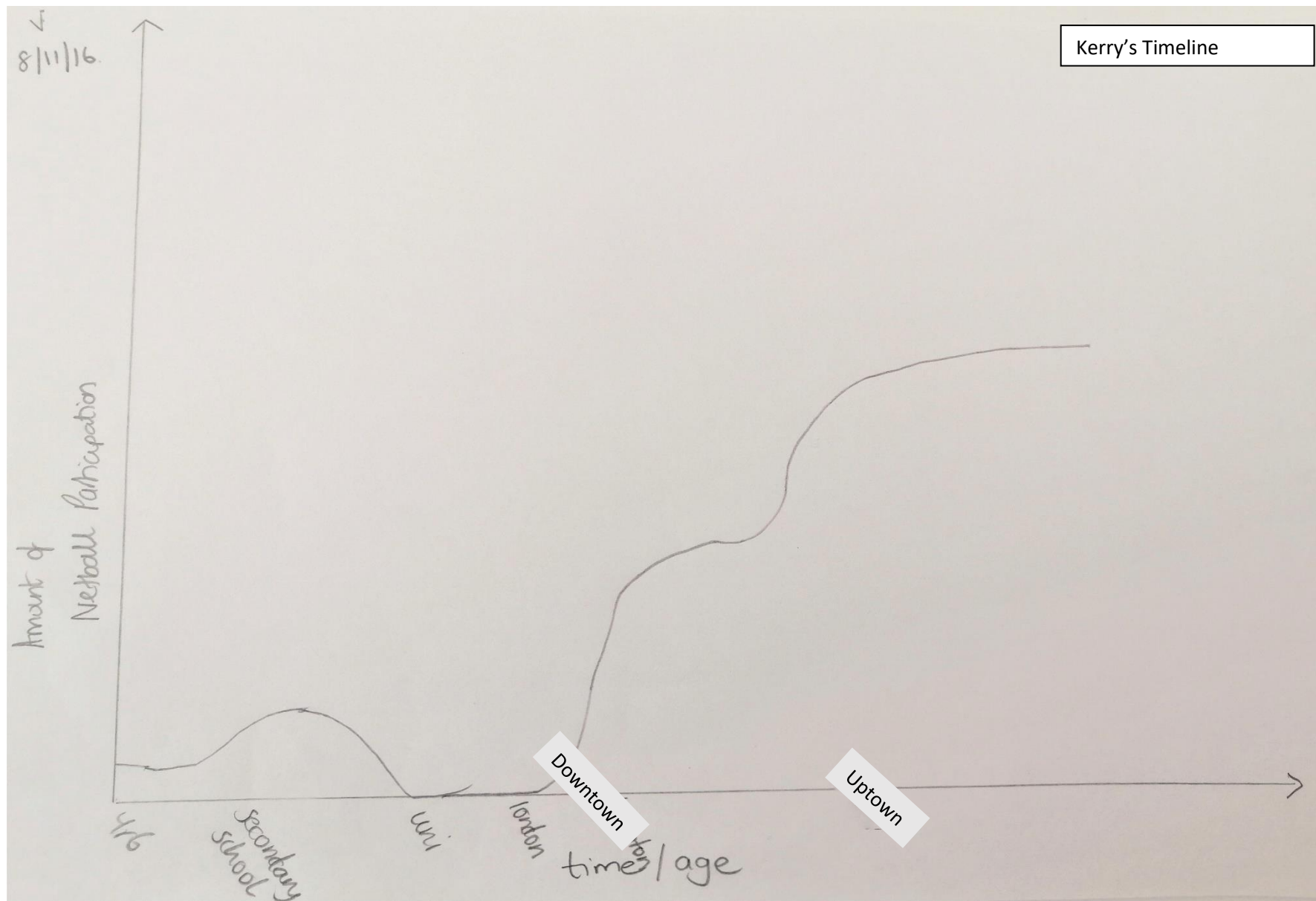
- Do you have any questions that you would like to ask of me?

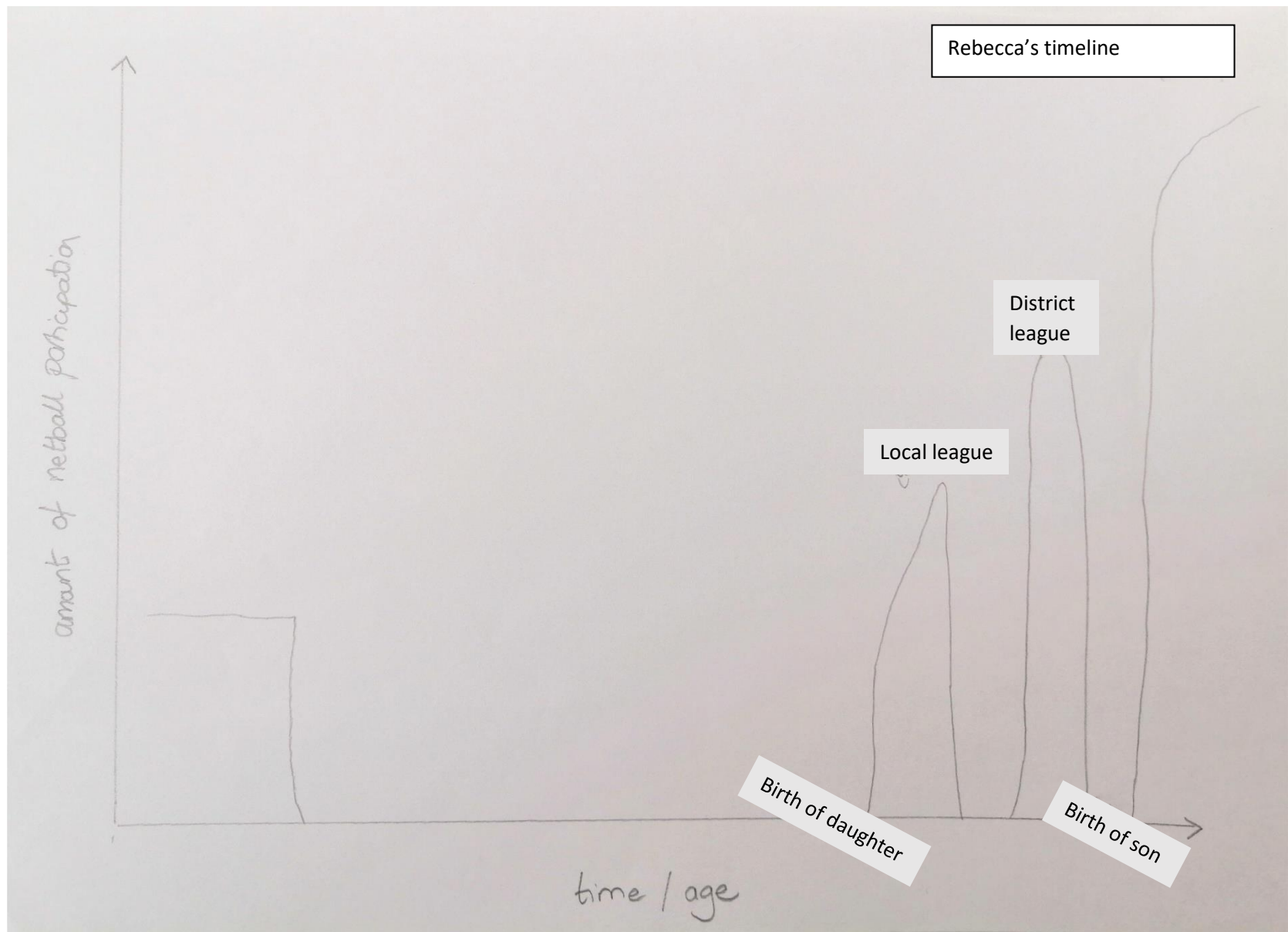
6. Summarise and recap the purpose of the interview and the next steps

Appendix C – Participant timelines

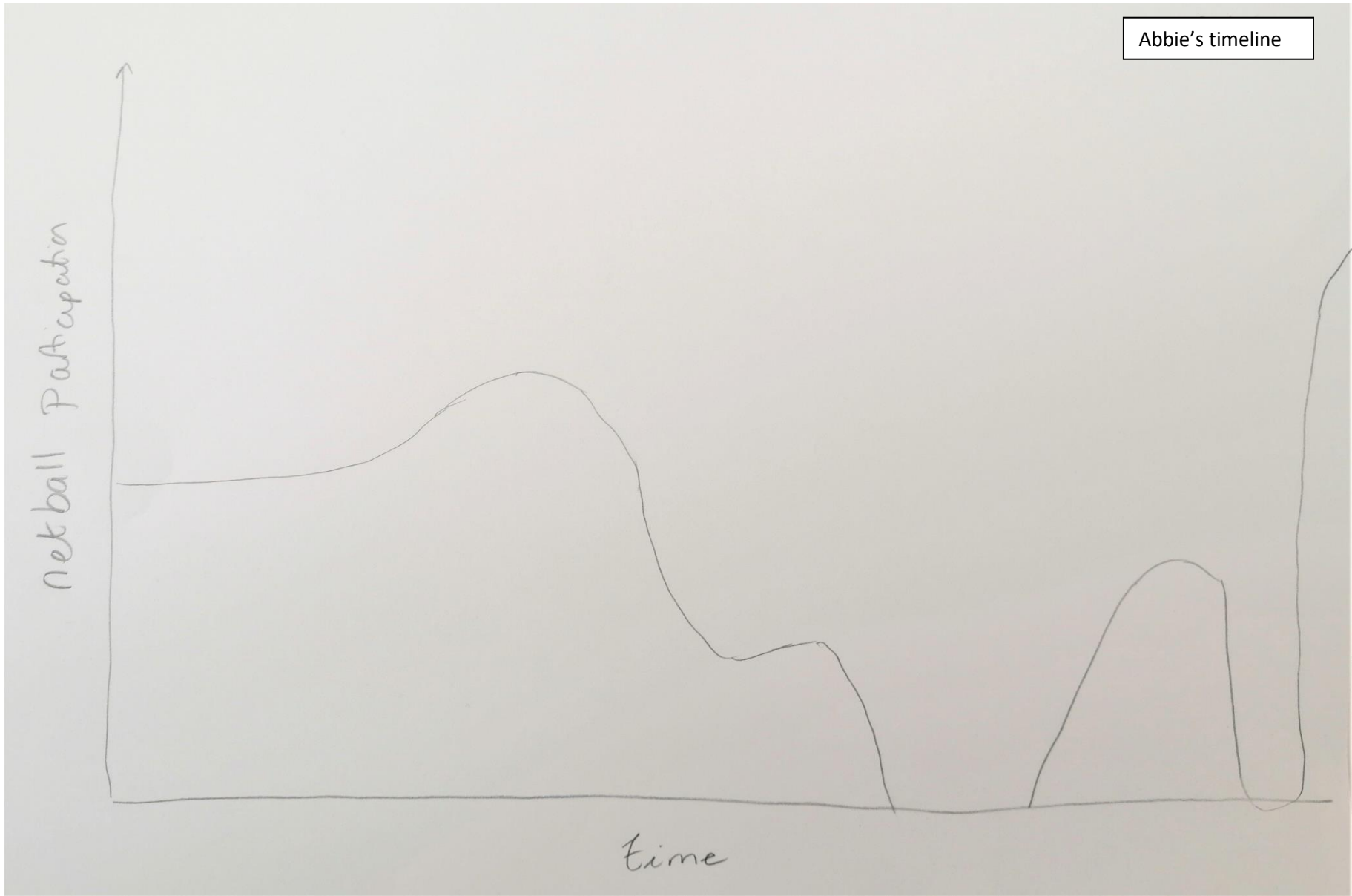






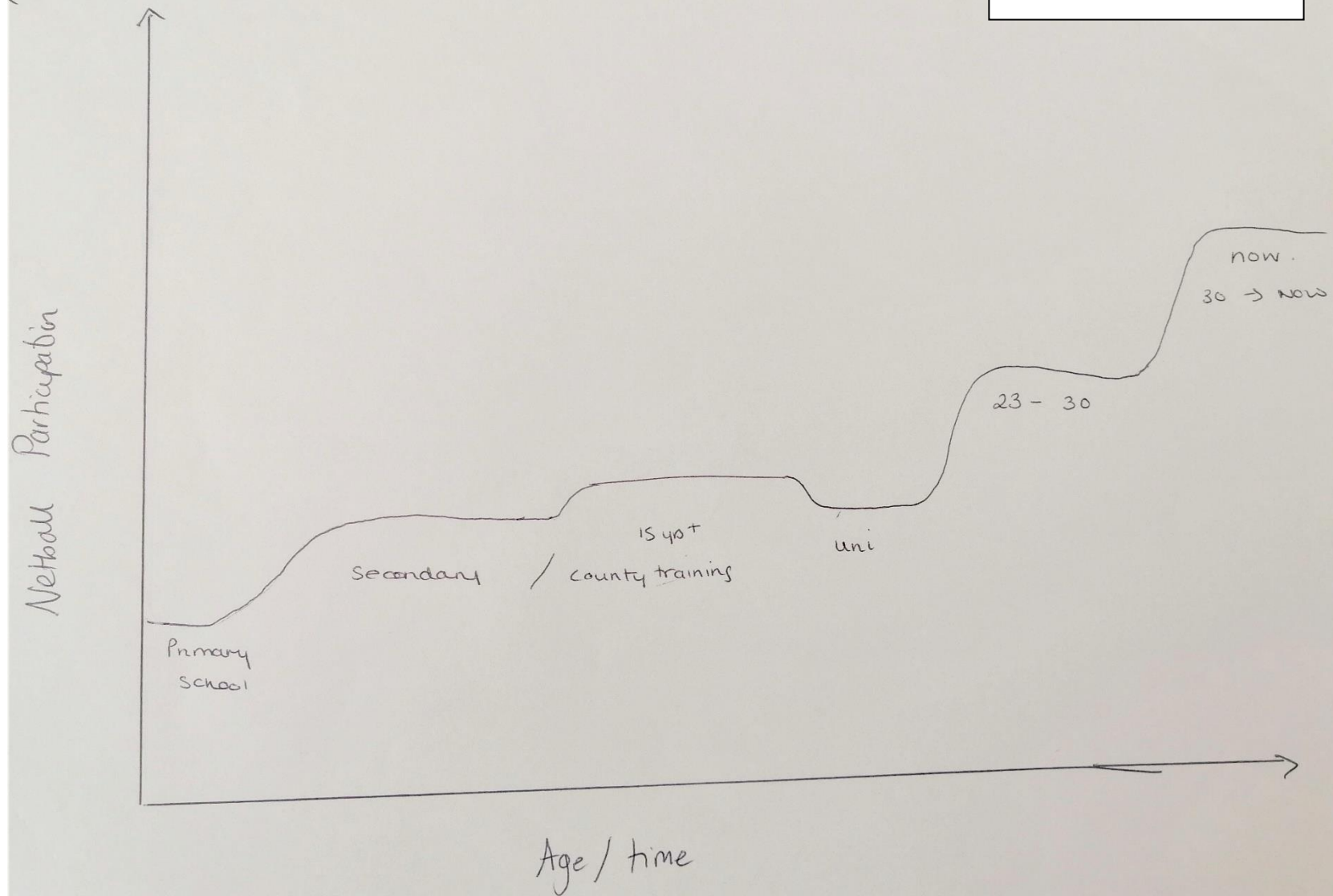


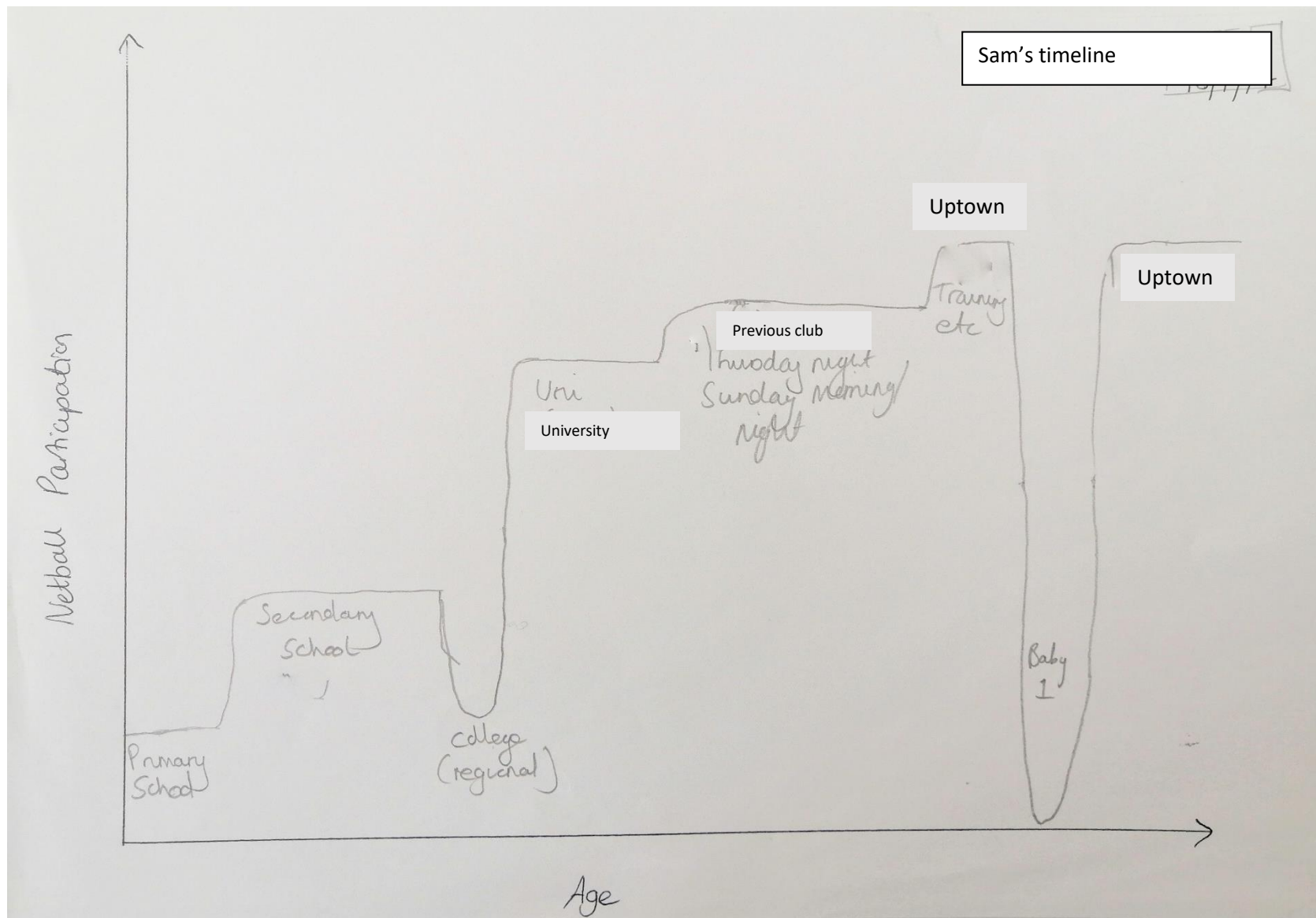
Abbie's timeline

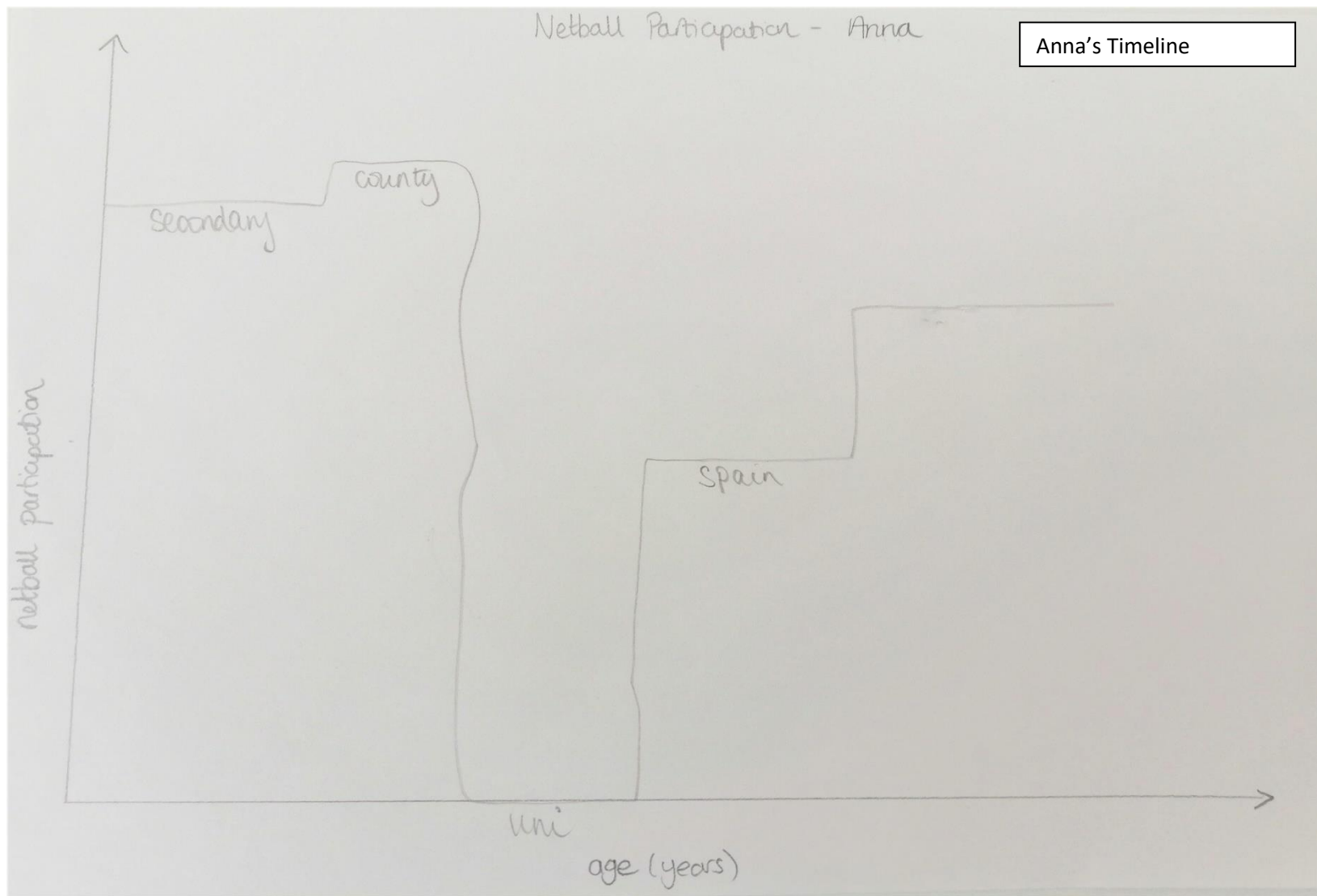


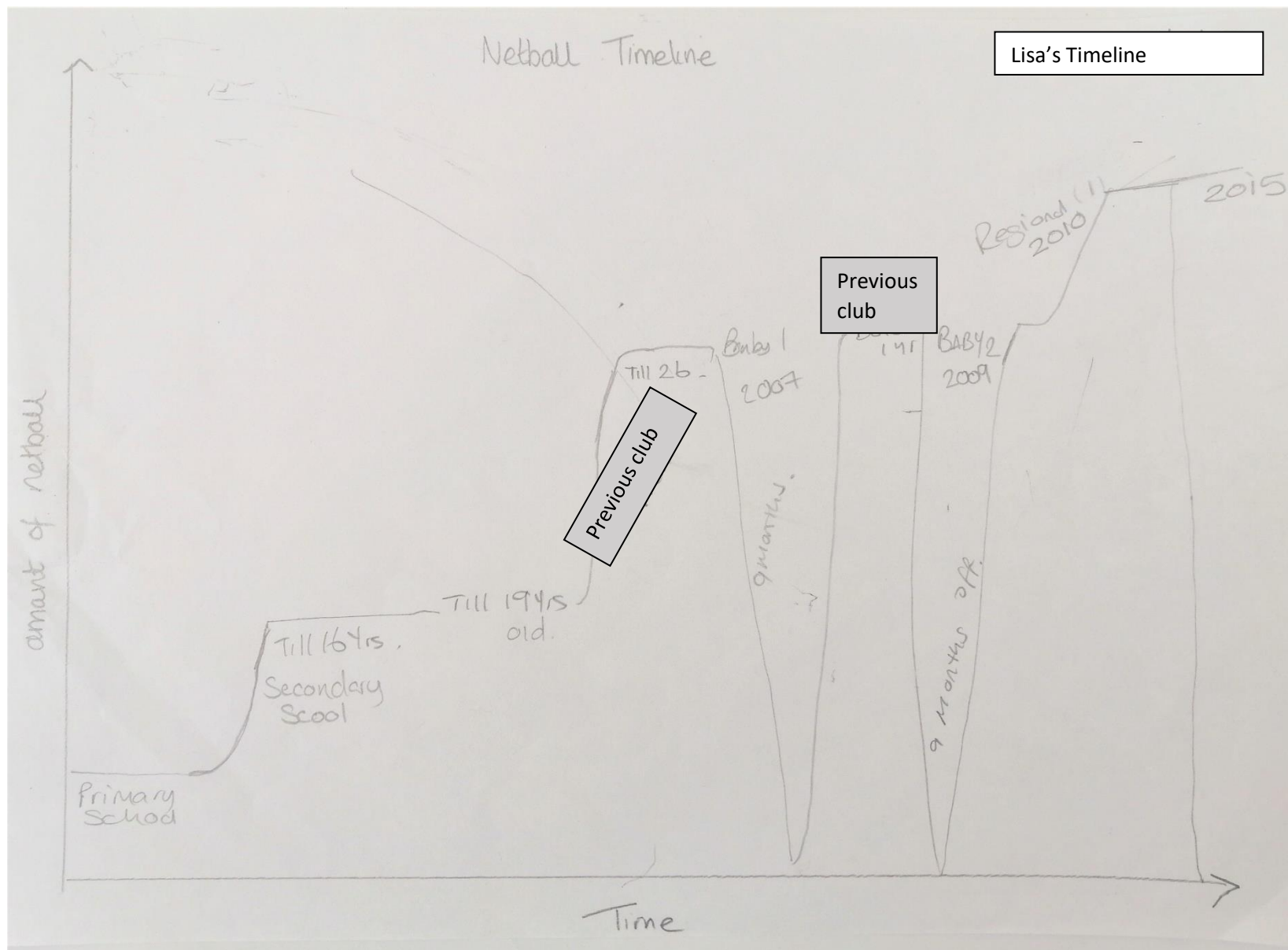
19/10/16 - Hannah

Hannah's timeline









Appendix D – Ethics Approval



From Dr Louise Westmarland
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email louise.westmarland@open.ac.uk
Extension 01908 652462

To Jessica Pinchbeck, Sport and Fitness / FELS

Project title Understanding women's participation in club sport: A case study

HREC Ref HREC/2153/Pinchbeck

AMS ref

Submitted 06/11/15

Decision date 12/02/16

Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a favourable opinion by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

Please note the following:

1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast doubt on, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.
2. It is essential that any proposed amendments to the research are sent to the HREC for review, so they can be recorded and a favourable opinion given prior to the any changes being implemented (except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is may be effected).
3. You are authorised to present this memorandum to outside bodies such as NHS Research Ethics Committees in support of any application for future research clearance. Also, where there is an external ethics review, a copy of the application and outcome should be sent to the HREC.
4. OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their frameworks for research ethics.
5. At the conclusion of your project, by the date stated in your application, you are required to provide the Committee with a final report to reflect how the project has progressed, and importantly whether any ethics issues arose and how they were dealt with. A copy of the final report template can be found on the research ethics website - <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/human-research-ethics-full-review-process-and-proforma#final-report>.

Kind regards,

Dr Louise Westmarland
Chair OU HREC <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>



Study Title: 'Understanding women's participation in club sport: A case study'

To all members of Uptown Netball Squad,

Some of you may know me already as I have played netball [locally] for over 15 years although for those of you who don't my name is Jessica Pinchbeck. I am a Sport and Fitness lecturer at The Open University and because you are a woman who plays local amateur netball I would like to invite you to participate in this project that is being undertaken as part of the requirements of my PhD at The Open University.

This participant information sheet provides details of the research process, your involvement as a research participant, and your rights in the collection, analysis and reporting of data. Please ensure that you read this information carefully and are clear about the research process prior to signing the participant consent form overleaf and committing to be part of this research project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and I thank you for considering my request.

If you decide to consent to participate in this research, you will consent to me being present at training and fixtures to observe participation and your participation will require you to meet with me on a one-to-one basis to be interviewed by me, the interviewer, relating to your experiences in sport. Interviews (1 or 2) will last approximately 60 minutes (but according to your wishes) and will be conducted at a venue of your choice.

This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. To give you a guide, questions will be about your early experiences of sport and physical activity, the influence of any parents and siblings, and also any other lifestyle factors that you think might have had an effect on your netball participation. Although the Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used. Therefore, in the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

I will be present at training sessions and some matches throughout the 2015-16 and 2016-17 seasons and any interviews or discussion will take place at a mutually agreed upon time and place. When at training you may see me taking notes and any interviews will be audio recorded so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The notes and recordings will only be reviewed by myself who will transcribe and analyse them. All data will be anonymised as much as possible by allocating each participant a pseudonym and you will be sent a copy of the interview transcript to check and approve. The original notes and recordings will be kept for a maximum of 10 years before being destroyed.

I, and my supervisors, will be the only people with access to raw data until the research is completed. The data will be held in electronic format on The Open University system, and in a hard copy, in a locked filing cabinet. You have the right during the period of data collection (February

2016 – May 2017) to withdraw from the study at any point and your interview data will be destroyed immediately. Taking part in the study is your decision and you are free to terminate the interview at any time during the interview process and request that your data be discounted, without prejudice.

We hope that through your participation in this study others in the community/society in general will benefit by learning how we can encourage and motivate more girls and women to participate in competitive sport.

Thank you for your consideration. To confirm your willingness to participate or your wish not to be included in the study all you need to do is complete the form below.

If you have any queries or concerns about the research at any point please feel free to contact me or my supervisors:

Dr Helen Owton (H.Owton@open.ac.uk)

Dr Sam Murphy (Sam.Murphy@open.ac.uk)

Dr Martin Toms (M.Toms@open.ac.uk)

Jessica Pinchbeck

The Open University, FELS, Stuart Hall Building - Level 2, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

Tel: 01908 652549

Mob: 07742000191

Email: jessica.pinchbeck@open.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation, it is much appreciated.

Consent Form



The Open
University

Study Title: 'Understanding women's participation in club sport: A case study'

Researcher: Jessica Pinchbeck

Have you read the information sheet for participants overleaf? Yes / No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? Yes / No

Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? Yes / No

Have you received enough information about the study? Yes / No

Were you given enough time to consider whether you wanted to participate? Yes / No

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection period, without having to give a reason for withdrawing? Yes / No

Are you aware of the confidentiality measures and satisfied that your identity will be protected? Yes / No

Do you agree to take part in this study? Yes/No

Signature

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and foreseeable risks of the proposed study to the volunteer.

Signature

Date

Study Title:

‘Understanding women’s participation in club sport: A case study’

To <insert participant name>,

Many thanks for agreeing to and being part of my research project during the netball seasons 2015-16 and 2016-17.

This letter provides a few more details of how the data collected about you as a research participant will be used and to provide an opportunity for you to voice any concerns you may have. Please ensure that you read this information carefully and are clear about the research process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The data collected in relation to the study involves the interview you participated in as well as my own field notes and observations from training sessions and matches. Within the project you have been issued a pseudonym and are referred to as XXX throughout the study. An example of data collected can be seen below:

<insert a specific quote from each player here>

This data will be used in the thesis itself which will be lodged in the OU library and is typically accessed by other academics and students. The data may also be used in academic publications aimed at other academics, at conference presentations to an audience of academics and practitioners and may potentially be included in OU teaching material viewed by OU students only.

Thank you again for your participation in the study. We hope that through your participation in this study others in the community/society in general will benefit by learning how we can encourage and motivate more girls and women to participate in competitive sport.

If you have any queries or concerns about the way in which the data is to be used please do contact me or my supervisors within the next 14 days:

Dr Sam Murphy (Sam.Murphy@open.ac.uk)

Dr Martin Toms (M.Toms@open.ac.uk)

Jessica Pinchbeck

The Open University, FELS, Stuart Hall Building - Level 2, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

Tel: 01908 652549

Mob: 07742000191

Email: jessica.pinchbeck@open.ac.uk

Thank you for your participation, it is much appreciated.

Appendix G – Initial codes and sub codes

spouse partner	attitudes	playing during pregnancy
support	break from netball	personality
spectating	socialisation into sport	lack of confidence
logistical	socialisation into netball	focused and goal driven
financial	sampling v specialisation	anxious
emotional	played range of sports	parents
spouse sport experiences	intense swimming regime	role models
spouse lifestyle	other childhood activities	parents sport experiences
parenting together	siblings	parenting style
sport experiences as an adult	sibling sport experiences	parental support
winning and losing	spectating sibling	parents spectating
volume of netball	sibling friendships	logistical support
university sport	sibling rivalry	financial support
socialisation and resocialisation as an adult	siblings as role models	emotional support
retirement from netball	age difference siblings	parental influence
the failing body	secondary school PE	family activities
previous club	transition from secondary to club netball	own children
Downtown culture	PE teacher	family support
own playing ability	opportunity	children's own activities
netball training	links to club netball	children spectating
netball abroad	lack of support	lifestyle
mixed netball	friends at school	work
level of participation	county pathway	second job
influential people	16-18 year drop off	job changes
indoor v outdoor	reasons for participation	full time and part time
guilt	team social aspect	time
commitment	friendships	stress

club culture	control	socialising and netball
team selection	commitment	other hobbies
social media	shutting off from work	money
social events	self-improvement	injuries
second team culture	me time	academic education
roles	identity	
peer pressure	health and fitness	
friendships	fun and enjoyment	
friendliness	de stress	
first and second team	competition	
conflict	competence	
coach	changing motivations	
coaching style	being a role model	
cliques	primary school PE	
banter	pregnancy	